

THE
MONTH

APRIL 1953

**THE MARLBOROUGH CASE:
LAST WORDS**

SIR SHANE LESLIE

**WORDSWORTH AND NATURE
MYSTICISM**

KATHARINE CHORLEY

**THE GHOST IN HAMLET:
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THE MARLBOROUGH CASE: LAST WORDS¹

By

SIR SHANE LESLIE

THERE WOULD BE NO GOOD REASON for a Catholic review of this book save that the ducal husband of the authoress became a Catholic after his second marriage, and that the ex-Duchess and her mother became the occasion of the most discussed "nullity case" since the conflict of Henry VIII with the Court of Rome. We agree, however, that the book is indeed an "autobiography" (though with many omissions and digressions), and the chapter "A New Life Unfolds" relates very interestingly the Duchess's social and political work in London after her separation from the Duke, work which witnesses alike to her kindness of heart and the wideness of her interests. She never lacks charity when alluding to the Duke, nor forgiveness towards her cruelly ambitious mother.

Since, however, her "nullity suit" is what remains in most people's minds both in the U.S.A. and in England, it is necessary to state very briefly the Church's doctrine about marriage. The essence of marriage is a free, permanent contract between one man and one woman. An alliance in which any of these essentials is lacking is, Catholics hold, *no marriage*; it is *null*. The word "annulment" should, then, never be used about such a case. To annul a marriage (or other contract), it would have to have existed. To declare a "marriage" null means, as in the case before us, that no marriage (as defined above) had existed.

To the worldly reader, this book displays the glitter of a life such as no American—or British!—lady will have the chance of seeing again. To Consuelo Vanderbilt and her Duke were laid

¹ *The Glitter and the Gold: An Autobiography*, by Consuelo Vanderbilt Balsan, formerly Duchess of Marlborough (Heinemann 1955.)

open all that money could buy or position offer in the late Victorian and Edwardian times. To many, though by no means all on either side, such an alliance seemed perfectly suitable. Two chapters are headed "A Debutante of the '90's" and "A Marriage of Convenience." Marriages of *convenance* (which does mean suitability, and not, precisely, convenience) had not been unknown and still are; but few, so far as we remember, record the persistent cruelty such as this sensitive girl had been subjected to. "Freedom" was out of the question; and in the atmosphere of divorce in which the contracting parties lived—her parents had been divorced and so had the Duke's—"permanence" was no noticeable idea. To the historian as such, the case may present an example of the cynicism prevalent in parts of the high Society; but is also a document of great archival value as exhibiting alike the Church's principles and her adherence to them. It will be quoted for precedents down the centuries. Old Mrs. Vanderbilt had considered marrying her light-hearted heavily-dowered daughter to some minor continental royalty, but finally decided to assign her either to Marlborough or to Lord Kerry, heir of the Marquis of Lansdowne, who as Viceroy had entertained her in India. Consuelo was brought to London to be looked over by Lady Paget, the most worldly of American women already there, as a horse-coper might examine a filly who would have to compete with better-looking rivals. Lady Paget said that if she was to "bring her out" she must at least dress her properly. "I was still in the ugly duckling stage," say the memoirs. "I felt like a gawky graceless child under her scrutiny." This lady had been Minnie Stevens, and to Consuelo, "with her quick wits and worldly standards, she was Becky Sharp incarnate."¹ Meanwhile Mrs. Vanderbilt had played a Queen's gambit. "Lady Paget was adamant," and put the Duke of Marlborough next to Consuelo at dinner. However, in 1894 the Vanderbilts returned to America, and Consuelo accepted "the only proposal of marriage I wished to accept," considered herself engaged "to the man she loved," planned an elopement, but found suspicions had been aroused:

¹ There were many suitors, among them Paul Deschanel, who read poetry to Mrs. Vanderbilt and was determined to be President of the French Republic. But when he revealed his matrimonial ambitions, the readings ceased abruptly: a Duke in hand was better than any bird-in-the-Élysée-bush. Yet when he was President, and found himself dancing with his *petit philosophe rose* at Buckingham Palace, he did not realize that she was destined to marry a Frenchman after all.

letters were intercepted—"when one is young and unhappy the sun shines in vain and one feels as if cheated of one's birthright. Like an automaton I tried on the clothes she ordered for me," and so they returned to England and visited Blenheim Palace.

An American Duchess had been there before. The Duke's father had married as his second wife "Mrs. Hammersley, an American widow, whose wealth had been freely spent installing central heating and electric light at Blenheim."¹ Mrs. Hammersley was the first of those who married three times, first for wealth, then for a title, and finally for love: she to a wild-hearted sporting Irish cousin of the reviewer's, Lord William Beresford, V.C., an alliance which alone of the three unions was blessed with offspring. Consuelo was impressed by the mighty building, by the great Marlborough's apotheosis painted on the ceiling, and the chapel devoted not so much to Christian worship as to that of the great Duke, as Consuelo's husband used to say. It was now that the Duke resolved to marry her and to give up the girl he loved, "as he told me tragically soon after our marriage. . . . But when I left Blenheim after that week-end I firmly decided that I would not marry Marlborough. . . . I dreamed of life in my own country with my Rosenkavalier."

But Marlborough was invited to Newport where Vanderbilts also lived in palaces, though smaller; "and my life became that of a prisoner with my mother and my governess as wardens." She was "locked behind those high walls," but once met the man of her heart at a ball. "We had one short dance before my mother dragged me away." None the less, she announced that she would marry "X" and had the right to choose her own husband. The storm broke. Mrs. Vanderbilt declared that "X" was notoriously immoral, had madness in his family, could never have children, and that she would shoot a man sure to ruin the girl's life! Consuelo had no one to whom she could turn: her mother was "ill and in bed"—a doctor had been sent for; her father was away at sea, so was her elder brother; there were no telephones; all letters had to be brought to her mother; the porter was ordered not to let the girl go out. Her mother's friend, Mrs. Jay, was brought to say that Mrs. Vanderbilt had had a heart attack and might die of any further shock, and she was sincere when she

¹ The author might have added the organ, the leaden acreage of the roof and the beautiful boathouse.

said she would shoot Mr. X should he reappear. Even Miss Harper, the governess, begged her to turn from what was "purely personal" to a "*higher idealism*." Whereupon in this concocted scene Marlborough arrived. An incredible series of festivities was arranged, and finally Marlborough "proposed" in the "Gothic Room (of the Vanderbilt Marble House) whose atmosphere was so propitious to sacrifice." The news was out. Consuelo's brother Harold declared flatly: "He is only marrying you for your money," whereat she burst into tears. The Duke then went off to see a country which "even then he announced he would never revisit. There was in his sarcastic comments on all things American an arrogance that inclined me to view his decision with approval."

Meantime Mrs. Vanderbilt had divorced her own husband and refused to invite any of that family to the wedding except Consuelo's grandmother (who in her turn naturally refused to come) and imperiously ordered all Vanderbilt presents to be returned: it was she who chose the eight bridesmaids and the trousseau. "Iphigenia was not even allowed to select her companions to the altar." Even on the eve of the marriage, we understand, Consuelo was as restive as she had the heart to be: the Rosenkavalier was not distant. She was, therefore, locked into her room, a sentinel at the door; not even her governess was admitted. The "radiant bride" (said the Press) descended the stairs twenty minutes late; so much had she wept that her swollen eyes needed "copious sponging": happily her veil was an adequate protection. Her divorced father had been commanded to give her away—after the pitiful ceremony he was dismissed. Well, many a marriage, allegedly made in Heaven, ends up in Purgatory. This one began there!

Yet the bride was ironically loaded with the spoils of two Empresses—Catherine of Russia and Eugénie of France—like diamonded fetters. Queen Victoria sent a telegram which was read in the train and her "intimidating presence" was felt even upon Long Island. In Madrid the Duchess was "vetted" by the late Prime Minister, Lord Rosebery, who sent a favourable report to the formidable Dowager Duchess who had already once sanctioned an American daughter-in-law, the mother of Mr. Winston Churchill, in days when it was uncertain whether the Jerome family were related to the aborigines of New York State or to the negroes of the South. Consuelo was presented to the

Queen Mother of Spain and later to the Imperial pair at St. Petersburg. She was kindly welcomed by the ducal Churchills and Hamiltons, who were all relieved to find that *this* bride could not possibly be mistaken for an American, and told her so! The Duchess Dowager (the Duke's grandmother) gave her a little lecture. "Your first duty is to have a child and it must be a son, because it would be intolerable to have that little upstart Winston become Duke. Are you in the family way?" On her side the young Duchess writes: "I was glad to turn to Winston, a young red-headed boy a few years older than I. He struck me as ardent and vital and seemed to have every intention of getting the most out of life. . . . He was the next heir to the dukedom and I wondered how he and his mother would regard me." It was, apparently, without the least trace of envy, though when he was born prematurely in Blenheim during a St. Andrew's Day Ball the superstitious declared that this was a "duc al omen."

The young Duchess cannot have found Blenheim exhilarating. During the Duke's long abstractions at dinner, she took to knitting, while "the butler read detective stories in the hall." The mantelpiece in her bedroom "looked like a tomb"; on it was inscribed "Dust, Ashes, Nothing" (this taken from the famous tomb of a Cardinal in Toledo Cathedral—*Pulvis, cinis, nihil*). But it is pleasant to recall her kindly work such as reading to the blind in the almshouses founded by a previous Duchess. "There was one gentle, patient old lady whom I loved. She used to look forward to my visits because she could understand every word I read to her. . . . I grew to know the Gospel of St. John because it was her favourite. Dear Mrs. Prattley—when I looked at her lovely peaceful face, the thin hands folded in her lap, the black shawl crossed neatly on her chest, the bowed head, the closed sightless eyes, the lips repeating the words of St. John after me, I felt the peace of God descending into that humble home and I was happy to go there for the strength it gave me." Long afterwards it was Prebendary Carlile, founder of the Church Army which did good work and was held to "respectabilize" the Salvation Army methods in the Church of England, who directed her kindly instincts, and she was photographed visiting the slums with the Prince of Wales. The only Catholic prelate she ever met—of all places at a ball at Apsley House!—was the Austrian Mgr. Vay de Vaya, Apostolic Protonotary, "whom I

knew well, as he often came to Blenheim, to which his violet cassock added a touch of almost Parisian elegance."¹

The years passed, in grandeur and in grief. We have to record, as the authoress does, that the beautiful and wealthy American, Miss Gladys Deacon, a dear friend of the Duchess's, came to Blenheim. She had already celebrated her first visit there by a wild flirtation with the German Crown Prince, as a result of which "a letter from the Emperor's Chamberlain informed me of His Majesty's indignation at the fact that Miss Deacon had accepted from the Crown Prince a ring which had been given him by his mother on the occasion of his First Communion! He requested me to return the ring at once." Whatever the Prussian Court felt about the Sacrament thus received, it was clear that the Empress's ring should not be handed over for so frivolous a reason.

When the Duke resolved (about 1902) to play a part in politics, he and his wife built the heavy and incongruous palace in Curzon Street which involved the demolition of an Anglican preaching Chapel. This was considered unlucky. The authoress relates that the old Prince of Wales, with whom they were dining, asked "with a malicious smile" what it could be called. Marlborough House was already in existence. "Why not 'Malplaquet'?" he suggested, in view of its proximity to the ill-favoured Shepherd's Market. But this witticism belonged to our grandmother, Lady Constance Leslie, from whom it had rapidly circulated through Mayfair. Little did the Duke imagine that a few minutes from his town house was the Jesuit church whence his crimson coffin² could be carried on the final journey to Blenheim and buried with the ritual proper to the Catholic Church. But first, the inevitable "separation" took place, and Consuelo lived alone in Sunderland House, save when it was filled by the many with whose charitable work she co-operated.

There seems to be some misunderstanding as to the sequence of what followed. In 1920 Consuelo divorced the Duke and next year married M. Jacques Balsan, who had been a visitor at Blenheim, in the Savoy Chapel Royal. The Duke then married Miss Deacon, who had become more interested in the achievements

¹ It is worthy to record that the worldly Monsignor died as a very humble Franciscan.

² He was buried as a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, and used to say that he hoped he would be given his right to a catafalque after death.

of the great Marlborough than of Frederick the Great. Now on page 236 of the book we are reviewing we read: "Some years later Marlborough, having joined the Catholic Church and wishing to regularize his marriage to Gladys Deacon in that Church, asked me to take steps to have our marriage annulled," that is, declared null by Catholic authority. This is inexact. We have inquired from Father Martindale, then of Campion Hall, Oxford, and learn that the Duke called on him and said he wished to become a Catholic. The priest said that he would not be able to receive him, as, in the eyes of the Church, he was still married to Consuelo, and there was no likelihood of Mrs. Vanderbilt and others involved giving evidence to show that the marriage had been a forced one. An *impasse* seemed to be reached; the Duke agreed, but came regularly for "instruction" to Campion Hall, as Father Martindale would not go to Blenheim. Thus three years passed. We do not know whether during that time the Duke communicated with Mme. Balsan or her mother; but anyhow no help from their side was forthcoming. Suddenly the Duke wrote to Father Martindale that the required evidence would be given. The reason for this was as follows. On page 241 Mme. Balsan writes that "orthodox Catholics are forbidden to recognize the marriage of a Catholic to a divorced person unless the latter's marriage has been dissolved by the Church."¹ Therefore "the Balsans, as devout Catholics, could not receive me." She naturally considered her marriage in an episcopal church valid already, and "would have been content to ignore ultra-religious views," but when "in 1926 Marlborough decided he wanted his first marriage to be annulled (*i.e.*, declared null), the pressure brought to bear by my French family and my desire to see Jacques at peace with them determined my decision to approach the Rota."

It was not in 1926 that the Duke "decided he wanted his first marriage" to be declared null, but it was only then that he heard that Mme. Balsan would be willing to apply for a decree of nullity. Sir Charles Russell, "a Catholic and a devoted friend," explained to her that her only valid claim "was the fact that she had been married against her will." Accordingly the evidence of

¹ Mme. Balsan wrote just above of the "dissolution" of previous (marriage) ties. But there is no question of "dissolution." The Church does not "dissolve" a marriage, but may pronounce a decree of *nullity*, *i.e.* declare that there had been no marriage at all. You cannot dissolve what is non-existent.

her mother, Miss Harper and others, was put before an English tribunal of canonists, and the case was then, according to rule, re-argued before the Roman Rota: finally the "nullity" was decreed on grounds of coercion. We have explained above that complete freedom is necessary for the validity of a marriage contract, and it is hard to suppose that the "permanence" of this particular alliance was taken into much consideration, given the fact that the parents—to look no further—of the contracting parties had been divorced. We like to recall the courteous charity shown by Mme. Balsan towards her mother (who gave evidence of her own behaviour with a frankness that was quite astounding): "I was happy to think that in her [Mrs. Vanderbilt's] marriage to Oliver Belmont she would find happiness. I did not then know how tragically short their married life would be." She also loyally denied the slander that the Rota had been bribed. The "disbursements were much less than the charges of a legal divorce." Moreover, since it was she who had brought the suit, the Duke's disbursements were practically nil! Mme. Balsan duly married Jacques Balsan by Catholic rites and was received by his family with open arms, and next year, February 1, 1927, Father Martindale received the Duke into the Church in Cardinal Bourne's private chapel. The ceremony was private; there were present only the Countess of Abingdon and Lady Gwendolen Churchill (sister-in-law of Mr. Winston Churchill) as witnesses. The Duke and Duchess were then presented to the Cardinal; he took, blessed, and replaced the marriage ring; and they renewed their marriage promise in his presence.

To make the order of events, then, perfectly clear, we summarize what we have said as follows: The Duke approached Father Martindale and said he wished to be a Catholic. The priest said he could not receive him as in the eyes of the Church he was, despite his legal divorce, still married to Consuelo. The Duke said that his original "marriage" had been due to coercion. The priest agreed, but said that evidence must be given before a duly constituted tribunal, and that surely that evidence would *not* be given. Three years therefore went by. Then, Mme. Balsan, finding that her French husband's family and others would not receive her socially, consented to apply to Rome for a decree of nullity and persuaded the requisite witnesses to appear. Finally, coercion was considered to be amply proved and the decree was

given. After some final "instructions" the Duke was therefore received into the Church.

Mme. Balsan had hoped that her case would have remained unpublicized, and so it would have been had the normal procedure been followed; the case and the gist of the evidence adduced would have appeared, in Latin, maybe two years later in a document read only by theologians. But here confusion arises. Our book says (page 242) that "all would have been well had not Marlborough gone to Rome to be received in audience by the Pope. News of the annulment then got about and promptly unloosed a blast of Protestant wrath aimed at the Rota for annulling an Episcopal marriage." But information about the nullity found its way into the popular Press even before the Duke's reception: Father Martindale recalls a reporter coming to ask him if, as a consequence, the Duke was to become a Catholic, nor can he remember any visit of the Duke to Rome about that time. The explosion was indeed terrific. The "cases" of the Empress Josephine, of the Princess of Monaco, or of Signor Marconi were politically and historically of more importance, but none rocked society alike in England and in America as this one did. One peculiarly noisome form of the controversy was the argument that the Pope had thus officially declared the two sons of the marriage (the present Duke and Lord Ivor Churchill) to be illegitimate. This was urged with singular venom by Mr. J. L. Garvin in the *Observer*. Father Martindale pointed out that the children of a marriage thought to be valid (*putativum*) were *not*, in Canon Law, regarded as illegitimate. His letter was not published. However, he pointed out elsewhere, that if this marriage, though coerced, was to be regarded as valid, then a woman could be married off like a head of cattle; or, if the marriage here concerned was *not* coerced, then the many witnesses—all Protestant—who swore that it *was*, had conspired to perjure themselves! No one liked to allege this; but directly even a skeletonized version of the evidence was published, the U.S.A. newspaper clippings dropped—we are assured—from three hundred to three in a single day. The London *Times* carried a controversy which is worth republishing in any history of the case.

It was no wish of ours to revive these ancient memories or to shower what we may call controversial confetti over them. But since this book has in fact revived them, and will even now be

quoted and used as a weapon against the integrity of the Holy See, we have felt bound to review it as we have done. We add only this—we have seemed to represent both Mrs. Vanderbilt and the Duke in an ugly light. We cannot deny that the former was a woman of soaring ambition, utterly unused to being contradicted, and worldly in the extreme. Still, in her circumstances she could hardly be expected to act otherwise than she did, and before the end her daughter was fully reconciled to her. As for the Duke, this is not *his* biography, but we can vouch for the change made in his charming but complicated character by his conversion to the Church. Beneath his liking for gaiety and pageantry he might almost have been called a mystic. Besides this, a remarkable case of telepathy could be quoted. Again, when he was dying of cancer in the house he had taken at Carlton House Terrace, he refused morphia, "for," said he, "I have embraced a religion that has the Crucifixion at its centre." He died in grace, having received the Last Sacraments from a Farm Street priest, and it was in that church that his Requiem was celebrated. Winston Churchill wrote his obituary in *The Times* as of his dearest friend and companion and this was afterwards published together with Father Martindale's very tactful address as delivered in the church.¹ After the funeral in the Blenheim chapel this priest read, as the Duke had long before asked him to, stanzas from his favourite poem, "In a dark Night," by St. John of the Cross, beginning:

In a dark night,
With anxious love inflamed—
O happy lot!—
Forth unobserved I went,
My house being now at rest.

So he passed to join his ancestors. His monument will be the great terraces and the mighty avenue of trees with which he enriched the future of the Blenheim his father had despoiled.

It is an interesting fact that shortly before his death the Duke had made arrangements through his friend the Duke of Alba to retire as a layman into a Spanish Benedictine monastery.

¹ *Charles, Ninth Duke of Marlborough*. Tributes by The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill and the Rev. C. C. Martindale, S.J. (Burns and Oates 8d).

WORDSWORTH AND NATURE MYSTICISM

By

KATHARINE CHORLEY

“**W**ORDSWORTH AND NEWMAN. They are the two for whom my love has been most like idolatry.” This was the reply given by Aubrey de Vere towards the end of his life when he was asked by Sir Edmund Gosse which of the great men he had met had impressed him most. The coupling in de Vere’s mind of these two men who followed paths so different suggests that more fundamental than the differences there must have been a common basis in their appeal. This common basis was an urgent and all embracing spiritual conception of life. The goal to which it carried Newman was the same to which Aubrey de Vere himself was led at a period of his life coming shortly after Wordsworth’s death and it was not a goal which Wordsworth had either understood or sympathized with. De Vere’s pairing of his name with Newman’s is therefore all the more remarkable. What then was the source of Wordsworth’s spiritual power? Any attempt to answer this question raises at once the problem of nature mysticism. Was Wordsworth a so-called nature-mystic? And if so, in what sense?

Those who have studied mystical experience and those who have had it tell us that, at any rate in its higher stages, it comes through the direct action of God on the soul. No man has a right to expect it however hard he may labour in his spiritual and moral life to attain it; it is a free gift. But on the other hand the gift does not seem to be made without the most ruthless spiritual labour on the part of the recipient. There must be a complete purging of self in the crucible of total love. And the gift when made is the inchoate experience of God as He is in His essence. Most of us know God only indirectly by faith as the object of what He has revealed to us about Himself. We know Him too as an inference from the findings of our discursive

reason. Sometimes we may feel His presence. This does not mean that our indirect knowledge is less certain than the direct experience of the mystic. But it does mean an incalculable difference of quality which makes loose talk about mysticism almost blasphemous. People play with the terms the great mystics have worked out to express and define the stages of their experience with a terrifying light-heartedness, applying them to states of mind and soul which are merely the result of emotional reactions. The steps of the mystical progress, as contemplation, the dark night of the spirit with its arid mental suffering, the final prayer of union which involves annihilation not only of sense perception, but also of intellectual activity in a pure and naked communion of being with Being have nothing to do with emotional states however splendid and however stimulated. If nature mysticism is anything more than an emotional response to natural beauty with an unconscious reflex action which endows nature itself with the emotions evoked it has to be examined and judged in the light of these criteria. And nature mystics must submit to the same yardstick as St. Theresa or St. John of the Cross, however diminished it may leave them.

Wordsworth's spiritual adventure began during his early schooldays at Hawkshead when he roamed at will over the fells and through the valleys of that loveliest tract of the Lake District, rowing and skating on the lakes and coming home at evening to the little town and the kindly hostess with whom he boarded. His childhood had been unusually happy, always unchafed, and secure in a family setting until he was thirteen. Then Hawkshead and Dame Tyson's cottage became his home until he left Cambridge. The early books of his great autobiographical poem *The Prelude* shine with passages in which he recalls and describes the effect upon him of intuitive experiences generated by the wonder and beauty of nature with which he lived in such close and untrammelled communion during those boyhood years. But he himself gives a particular occasion and date—it was an early morning walk during his first summer vacation from Cambridge—when these experiences seemed to be gathered up to a focus and he became conscious of a definite vocation in connection with them. He describes the mountains bright and solid, the meadows suffused with the sweetness of common dawn, the gleam of the distant sea. And he says:

I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me, bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated spirit.

But he does not say to whom or what this passive sense of dedication refers. All he seems to know is that in some way this experience set him apart; it is almost as if he had felt an impulse of dedication to himself. "The sentiment of Being" is perhaps an explanation of what happened. A sudden heightened awareness of being elicited by that early morning purity of beauty caught up his spirit, possessed him and he felt that he was dedicated to being and so in a sense to himself as part of being. This is cardinal to an understanding of his mind. Being, the sense of ever present life which sustains life is a constant base of his spiritual thought. It is easy to make a careless confusion between this perception of being and Pantheism because the sustaining Source of all Being is perceived, as it were, intuitively through the medium of created being and not as a direct inference by the discursive reason. The mistaken notion that Wordsworth was ever a Pantheist probably arises from such a confusion made by some of his more undiscerning commentators.

Wordsworth was deeply aware of his mental and spiritual debt to these years of freedom among the hills. The nostalgic baffled longing for the clear vision of childhood which so often swept through him in later life is proof of this:

Fair seed-time had my soul and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear.

Again and again he re-lives these experiences of boyhood and adolescence, striving to recapture their immediacy and to comprehend their spiritual meaning. Thus when he was still an undergraduate already the form of spirituality was clear that would give shape and inspiration to the thought of his great period—the period whose writings seriously raise the problem of his mysticism.

What of the specific religious belief, the intellectual creed which should form a framework, a check and a point of reference for his intuitive experience? Evangelicalism was the forceful religion at Cambridge during his time, but Wordsworth was uninfluenced. The Evangelical approach would clearly be antipathetic to him intellectually, and emotionally it had none of that historic

and romantic appeal which later drew him towards the medieval Christianity of his own island. And he had conceived a youthfully healthy contempt for what he took to be the empty formalism of College Chapel religion. Perhaps this confirmed and strengthened his feeling that his own spiritual life received a special nourishment through contact with nature, a position which enabled him to evade the challenge of definite questions of belief. For though he certainly believed in God (he wrote home from Switzerland in 1790 to his sister Dorothy: "Among the more awful scenes of the Alps, I had not a thought of man or a single created being. My whole soul was turned to Him who produced the terrible majesty before me") his belief was intuitive rather than intellectual and its guarantee came from his own deep experiences with nature. He did not feel the need to pin down his sense of God in precise theological propositions; the delimiting abstracting quality of conceptual knowledge about God would have irked him. He preferred to leave vague the nature of God and the claims of Christianity. But the symbols of Christianity moved him, its concepts, or some of them, persisted in his mind as sentiments to be cherished. Week by week at Hawkshead he had witnessed the expression of a simple Bible Christianity; it was part of the Hawkshead *ethos* and he put the sentiment of it tenderly by in his mind. Again, when he visited the Grande Chartreuse *en route* for the Alps in 1790 and saw about the deserted monastery soldiers of the Revolution fresh from their work of expelling the monks, he was deeply shocked. It seemed to him that the clean high peaks of the Alps overlooking the scene were crying out against the sacrilege. Like most of the generous-minded young men of his time he was an ardent revolutionary, and he had to steady his faith by dismissing the violation from his mind with a poetic equivalent of the time-honoured excuse that you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. The same discomfort assailed him when, the following year, in the company of his officer friend Beaupuy, the revolutionary knight *sans peur et sans reproche*, he wandered along the banks of the Loire and saw wrecked monasteries and convents. He was stirred to an unease which even Beaupuy's certainties, clear and appealing as a trumpet's note, could not altogether dispel.

The lack of firm intellectual structure coupled with such strong

religious sentiments and intuitions may well account for the severity of a spiritual breakdown which Wordsworth suffered in his early twenties, a searing time during which he seems to have completely lost his capacity for perceiving moral and spiritual truths through contact with nature and almost to have lost his capacity for making any creative contact with nature at all. The breakdown is directly attributable to disillusionment and a conflict of loyalties resulting from the evil turn of events in Revolutionary France. But it is hardly possible to understand the full flowering of his spiritual genius which followed hard upon his collapse—a condition, however, which certainly had nothing in common with any dark night of the soul of Christian mysticism—without reference to his state of mind during this bleak and bitter period. Two things broke him up. The triumph of the Jacobin dictatorship with all that it meant of cruelty and violence and the suppression of gentle and generous opinion in France; and the attitude of his own country when she joined the Allies and declared war. He attributed the evil in France to the interference of the Allies and the consequent frantic fear among Frenchmen of defeat in war, and therefore he held England jointly responsible for the ruin of the original clean and free revolutionary ideal. But in all this he was in conflict with his own deepest instincts. He would not give up his faith in the Revolution and in his famous *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* expresses extreme revolutionary views in phrases of violent invective, yet he feared and loathed mob terror and in a private letter to his friend and confidant, Matthews, condemns it without equivocation. Perhaps he was compensating for his own inner war by the violence of his attack on the liberal Bishop who had nevertheless seen fit to protest against the execution of Louis XVI. More racking still, he loved his own country passionately and yet could only hate her for the part which he believed she was playing in the great betrayal.

There is no evidence that Wordsworth repudiated all belief in God during this time. But in storms of intellectual and moral crisis, intuitive belief fortified only by subjective experiences, particularly when the experiences cease, is an untrustworthy compass. It seems rather that, overwhelmed by his problems, he could no longer recognize God's Providence through nature and so came near to the spiritual sin of despair, despair for humanity

in general. By a terrible paradox, the sin of despair can only be committed by those who in the depths of their being do believe in God. This is the time to which commentators ascribe his "Godwinism." Professor Willey suggests that he may have used Godwin's system as "escapism," taking refuge in pure abstractions from the concrete realities of life which had so deeply upset him. It may well be too that it comforted him for a short while by blurring his sense of each individual's moral responsibility for the evil that he does and throwing the burden of guilt back on an unjust society. Certainly some of his poems written in the years after his return from France suggest this. He had a curiously deficient comprehension of the ideas of penitence and forgiveness, and this allied to his acute ethical sensitivity must have made the problem of evil, forced by events to the centre of his mind, insoluble and unbearable. In his own words:

I lost all feeling of conviction, and in fine,
Sick, wearied out with contrarieties
Yielded up moral questions in despair.

He was led out of this engulfing depression largely through the companionship and influence of his sister with whom he set up a home in the autumn of 1795. Gently but surely her influence brought him back to his old trust in nature as a medium for the manifestation of spiritual truth, and the capacities which he had first felt take possession of his soul during his boyhood days at Hawkshead revived and developed. Perhaps her rehabilitating help was more simply and spontaneously given and received because her own love of nature was far more direct than his. She observed and delighted in what she saw and was content, whereas he reflected upon and intellectualized his experience. It was at this time too that he first met Coleridge and the quick rich growth of their friendship was like a fertilizer for his creative powers.

The slow climb back to mental and spiritual health brought Wordsworth to the crests of his vision. In 1798, he wrote *Tintern Abbey* to express the healing of his soul and the new and deeper insights to which he had attained. It was almost as if nature held the truths he sought in solution and they were precipitated by a strange discerning contact of the poet's mind. And the truths which were precipitated for him renewed his faith in a divine

wisdom and love, renewed his faith in human beings and strengthened it by a deeper and more discerning compassion for the human situation. With *Tintern Abbey*, he entered his great period, a time which may be said, although a little arbitrarily, to close with that magically lovely but spiritually baffling poem *The White Doe of Rylstone* written in 1808, ten years during which his inspiration from nature was re-lived in memory or experienced afresh at its purest and most intense. He wrote *The Prelude*, a considerable part of *The Excursion*, *Intimations of Immortality*, and almost all the poems which express his seer's vision of the common man. Politically, the conflict in his mind had been finally solved by a disillusion as cruel as that which had raised it, but a disillusion which now meant the extinction rather than the racking birth of a problem. He wrote *Tintern Abbey* on the eve of the Battle of the Nile. He now saw that France was in the throes of Imperialist expansion and the revolutionary war of defence had become in Bonaparte's hands a naked war of aggression. He himself says that his eyes were finally opened by Bonaparte's violation of Switzerland. No longer cut off in sympathy from his own country, he began to believe passionately in the justice of her cause. It was the end of that prisoning sense of frustration. He could breathe the national atmosphere deep into his lungs without choking, and because he could breathe freely politics ceased to obsess him and he was at liberty for his own proper purposes.

At the summit of his powers, when his writing challenges the question of mystical experience, Wordsworth was certainly not an orthodox Christian and his belief in God was still not exactly defined and probably tentative regarding God's nature. Illogically perhaps, he was far more certain of God's attributes of wisdom, love and goodness than he was of God's nature as Person. But at the same time he was in full revolt against the chilly intellectualism of the eighteenth century which had relegated God to the role of an absentee landlord or a retired inventor. It was this that made Newman write of him:

Those great names in our literature, Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Wordsworth, Mr. Coleridge, though in different ways and with essential differences from one another, and perhaps from any Church system, bear witness to it—a progress in the religious mind to something deeper and truer than satisfied the last century.

He hated the famous analogy of the Watch-maker with an almost odd intensity. It is the occasion for a remarkable passage in a letter written to his friend Mrs. Clarkson in 1814. Mrs. Clarkson had passed on a criticism of *The Excursion* in which he was accused of being a "worshipper of nature."

... She condemns me for not distinguishing between Nature as the work of God and God Himself. But where does she find this doctrine inculcated? Whence does she gather that the author of *The Excursion* looks upon Nature and God as the same? He does not indeed consider the Supreme Being as bearing the same relation to the universe as a watch-maker to a watch. In fact there is nothing in the course of the religious education adopted in this country, and in the use made by us of the Holy Scriptures, that appears to me so injurious as perpetually talking about *making* by God.

It is true that this was written in 1814 when his view had crystallized into near orthodoxy. But from the context he clearly intended it to cover his beliefs as far back as the writing of *Tintern Abbey* and it harmonizes with his remark in the letter to Dorothy of 1790 about the effect on him of the Alps. Incidentally, it disposes finally of the theory that he was ever a Pantheist. Yet he is still using those sobriquets for God so dear to the eighteenth century mind—"the Supreme Being," "the Supreme Governor," etc. It is as if, despite his revolt against the thin eighteenth century abstractions, he was still unwilling to commit himself to the implications of a Personal God. However that may be it is clear that always, instinctively, he understood the subtle but fundamental difference between a "maker," and a "creator." Certainly in 1800 he recognized God as Creator when he wrote this passage from *The Prelude*:

... O Power Supreme
Without Whose care this world would cease to breathe
Who from the Fountain of Thy Grace dost fill
The veins that branch through every frame of life.

It would be hard to find a clearer or more vivid statement of Christian doctrine on this point. And the point is important to establish because it reduces the chances of being trapped in false mysticism.

The man who has this recognition clear will not be tempted to invest nature itself with qualities which derive from his own

emotions. He may hold as Plato did that beauty resides in the nature of God and is imparted to earthly things, so that by communion with this spiritual essence informing and revealed in earthly beauty men may be sanctified and spiritualized and have visions of God and the eternal "world of ideas." But he will not be likely to mistake his own emotions for such an experience or vision of God. That Wordsworth was certainly aware of this pitfall is clear from two passages of *The Prelude* in which he reflects on the meaning of his intense experiences through nature as a youth. In the first he realizes that he himself has brought something to his experience:

. . . An anxiliar light
Came from my mind, which on the setting sun
Bestowed new splendour. . .

In the second, he questions whether this is all or whether he has not in fact been shown the Reality behind phenomena:

. . . My seventeenth year was come;
And, whether from this habit rooted now
So deeply in my mind, or from excess
In the great social principle of life
Coercing all things into sympathy,
To unorganic natures were transferred
My own enjoyments; or the power of truth
Coming in revelation, did converse
With things that really are; I, at this time
Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.

These experiences whose meaning puzzles him he tries to describe in lines such as:

Oft in these moments such a holy calm
Would overspread my soul, that bodily eyes
Were utterly forgotten, and what I saw
Appeared like something in myself, a dream,
A prospect in the mind. . .

Wordsworth was not a philosopher. He strove hard and honestly to understand his experiences, but he did not feel the need to rebuild them into a system of abstract thought. Plato's position is the most obvious and nearest to hand explanation of nature mysticism and it is implicitly behind much of his thought, but he never makes it an explicit base. This may also be due to

a deeper spiritual discernment to which sometimes he reaches out and which Plato hardly attains. The experiences of boyhood which cause him to question their nature can perhaps be explained subjectively, but there is one passage in *The Prelude* which cannot admit a merely subjective explanation. He is looking back on what he felt when he crossed the Alps in 1790:

But to my conscious soul I now can say
 "I recognize the glory" in such strength of usurpation
 When the light of sense goes out, but with a flash
 That has revealed the invisible world. . . .

Moreover, we can see that he practised detachment in order to keep his vision clear. He made a sort of ascetic mental discipline for himself, hard to define, but apparent in his writings. In the years immediately following 1798, external circumstances made this easy for him. He had few commitments, he had given no hostages to fortune except perhaps in his relationship with Coleridge. A study of the two final books of *The Prelude*, perhaps the most profound of his spiritual writings, gives an idea of the lines of this asceticism. He tells, for instance, how not only "sitting in judgment" spoilt his vision and had to be suppressed for the sake of a more contemplative and receptive frame of mind, but also how natural beauty brought him under an immediate dominion of the senses at one time and how this spell had to be broken:

. a time
 When the bodily eye, in every stage of life
 The most despotic of our senses, gained
 Such strength in me as often held my mind
 In absolute dominion. . . .

A light is thrown on this deep and difficult aspect of his spirituality by a passage in Thomas Merton's *Ascent to Truth*:

The contemplation of God in nature, which the Greek Fathers called *theoria physica* has both a positive and a negative aspect. On the one hand, *theoria physica* is a positive recognition of God as He is manifested in the essences (*logoi*) of things. It is not a speculative science of nature but rather a habit of religious awareness which endows the soul with a kind of intuitive perception of God as He is reflected in His creation. This instinctive religious vision of things is not acquired by study so much as by ascetic detachment.

What seems to have happened during the period when Wordsworth was writing from the crests of his vision is that contemplation of nature acted on him as a sort of *catharsis*, purging his mind of all its tormented pre-occupations about society, returning it to a state of childlike purity. For nature as such is unconcerned with human problems. This is perhaps the key to the symbolic meaning which he gives to the doe in *The White Doe of Rylstone*. Through the companionship of the animal, innocent with a kind of impersonal purity, the stricken girl whose family has been wiped out in the Rising of the North is enabled to recover her poise and grow into a still serenity of mind. Purged in this way and by his own ascetic disciplining, Wordsworth's mind became free and detached. He was able to penetrate beyond phenomena to "authentic tidings of invisible things," and he was able to do this not only by means of fresh experience, but even more certainly it would seem through his capacity for reliving the experiences of his boyhood and youth. "Recollected in tranquillity" these experiences could pass beyond gleams of perception flashed upon his mind to an intuition of God clarified and to some extent controlled by his reflecting intellect. But it is important to notice the word he uses—tidings. He does not claim a direct apprehension of the Being of God.

Wordsworth largely lost his power of vision and the circumstances in which he lost it and the glimpses we get of his distress of mind when he felt the faculty atrophying bear out this interpretation. The faculty withered when external circumstances began to crowd in and break up the private ascetic mental and emotional discipline he had made for himself. He married happily, had children subject to all the ailments, in two cases fatal, which made the rearing of a family in those days an anxious and uncertain process. He had imperatively to earn a living. His domestic life necessarily lost the carefree quality which it had had when he lived alone with Dorothy. His range of friendships and society enlarged and produced a number of distracting allurements. In fact the three affections, good in themselves, which those called to the vocation of a contemplative have to give up became naturally and properly insistent in his life. He had taken up the responsibilities of human love, he must interest himself in property or ways and means, and he had to choose among different paths through life. Finally, a renewed pre-occupation with politics once

more marred his capacity for recollection. The still sad music of humanity which he had heard at Tintern transfused as it were through nature again became strident and discordant. The menace of Napoleon gripped his mind like an obsession. In 1809 he wrote his tremendous Miltonic tract against the Convention of Cintra and shelved all poetry-making for months. Sometime during this period, the date is unknown, but the sonnet was published in 1807, he wrote:

The world is too much with us: late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

He was painfully aware of all that he was losing, and with an almost unbearable longing tried to recapture the pure visions of boyhood in which he knew his seer's faculty had been born. In 1802 he wrote the poignant lines to little Hartley Coleridge and between 1803 and 1806 *Intimations of Immortality* which expresses most fully his foreboding sense of coming loss. The loss was gradual and spasmodic rather than sudden and complete; and the explanation suggested seems to fit the facts better than any attempt to equate it with the Christian mystic's periods of spiritual aridity. It is rather an indication of the definite limits to Wordsworth's mystical approach to God through nature.

What he had had since the day of his self-dedication at Hawkshead was the capacity to grasp and experience the transcendental reality of being through some illuminating intuition begotten on his soul by particularized instances of created being in nature. In these moments of illumination he was intensely aware of his own being and of its spiritual kinship with all other being gathered into the eternal and all-sustaining Being of God. Reflection and recollection deepened these intuitions and fixed them intellectually, enriching their scope and application so that they became a demonstration of God. Apprehension of God in this manner is far closer to the mystic's knowledge than knowing God simply by inference. But it is still far short of that immediate uniting vision which is the goal of the mystic's pilgrimage because God is still only partially realized and realized still only through the medium of created being.

It would be presumptuous to inquire why Wordsworth's

spiritual reach stopped short at this point since we should be trespassing into a region where Grace directly operates. But we are entitled to find a relevance in certain aspects of his spiritual life. Above all else, the mystic needs humility and love, a giving love which seeks only to make a complete and utter gift of self to the object of love. There was in Wordsworth a strain of almost Pelagian self-sufficiency. It is clearly discernible in his use of remorse rather than penitence, of expiation rather than forgiveness and absolution in the last lines of *The Borderers*. Remorse is mostly an effect of shattered pride in one's own sufficiency for goodness and expiation is too easily mistaken as the capacity to annul sin by one's own efforts. In this sense, and it is the sense in which Wordsworth seems to take them, both are the resort of the broken self-sufficient rather than the broken humble man. Again, during his Christian years, he wrote of penitence:

I cannot raise myself to this state of feeling. I feel and lament my own unworthiness but the feeling of penitence is lost in sympathy with the virtues of others, or contemplation of Our Saviour's character, so that I seem to remember my own shortcomings no more.

This remark, so touching in its simplicity, has the virtue of modesty but scarcely of a deep humility.

On the second need, the capacity for a total gift of self in love, there is much in Wordsworth's character and thought which has a significant bearing. There is a canniness and caution which despite his passionate espousal of causes never allowed him to compromise himself. He did not publish his open letter to the Bishop of Llandaff which, at a time when men whose views were no more advanced than his were being singled out for prosecution, might well have got him into trouble. Dorothy comments with relief on his caution in more than one letter of this period. And after he had written his tract on the Convention of Cintra and sent it off to London for publication, he was seized with exaggerated alarm lest it should have dangerous personal repercussions, so much so that he became the kindly laughing stock of his womenfolk who took a more balanced view. Then, too, in his personal relations it seems as if he were always innately afraid to give the whole of himself; even with Coleridge, something fundamental was withheld. Similarly, with the women who came

closest to him. He never repudiated Annette Vallon, the young Frenchwoman who bore his child, and to the end of his life kept in touch with her and his daughter and looked after their interests as well as he could. Marriage in 1791 between a French girl and a penniless English youth with no home and no career would certainly have been wildly impractical, yet his parting with Annette leaves a question-mark which is underlined by those strange poems written soon after his return from France around the theme of deserted women. His own subsequent marriage was affectionate and happy perhaps because it gave him a cushioning which in the event may have done him more harm than good since he accepted it with complacency. He loved his sister, realized how she had helped him out of his bad years, but it was she who gave herself, happy in doing so for the brother she adored. Far later in his life came his love for his daughter Dora, deep yet possessive and so causing the long delay in her marriage since he could only believe in her happiness in terms of his own. His behaviour here makes a somewhat unedifying contrast with Dorothy's heroic effort to achieve a cheerful and generous self-effacement at the time of his own marriage.

This self-withholding and self-sufficiency was at a deeper level than defence mechanism against a crowding in of life and responsibilities, responsibilities which he certainly did not try to evade once he had incurred them. And it was untouched by the mental ascetic discipline which had helped to keep his vision clear. It is directly traceable into his spiritual life. Contemplation and meditation were the means he used to distil his experiences through nature, but he never understood the purpose of life of a contemplative religious. Pondering on his visit to the Chartreuse he realized that there men had lived who had conquered sense by means of meditation and a faith based on revelation, but there is an implication that the conquest is made simply for an end of self-perfection; there is no suggestion that its purpose is to enable a man to give himself more purely and wholly in love to God. This limitation of insight emerges explicitly in the *Ecclesiastical Sonnet*, "Abuse of Monastic Power," written about 1821 which concludes with the lines:

Inversion strange! that unto one who lives
For self, and struggles with himself alone,
The amplest share of heavenly favour gives;

That to a monk allots, both in the esteem
Of God and man, place higher than to him
Who on the good of others builds his own.

And years later, in 1841, after travelling past a Trappist monastery which had recently been founded in Charnwood Forest, he noted in a puzzled way: "Surely it is too late in the day for such institutions to be of much service in England at least. The whole appearance had in my eyes something of the nature of a dream and it has often haunted me since." Put bluntly, the life of a contemplative appeared self-centric to Wordsworth simply because he could not understand sympathetically the ideal of self-surrender in love and for the sake of love. He certainly believed in a two-way relation of love between God and man and man and God, but for him the human way was expressed by praise and thanksgiving and stopped far short of the mystic's desire for union through the annihilation of all self-regarding. Again, the blinkers of Pelagianism narrowed his insight. Moreover, his strong ethical bent disposed him to look for heroism and goodness in action. And even here he did not recognize an ideal of self-surrender. His friend Beaupuy lived with complete selflessness for the service of the Revolution and Beaupuy's influence on him was profound. Wordsworth wrote the character of *The Happy Warrior* as a tribute to his favourite brother John, the Captain of an East Indiaman lost off Weymouth in 1805, but hidden in his mind it was the memory of Beaupuy that shaped the poem. Beaupuy gave himself for his dream of a true human society, yet Wordsworth suggests no surrender of self in the character of *The Happy Warrior*; essentially the happy warrior is self-sufficient.

One final consideration; Wordsworth, as we have seen, did not care to formulate his beliefs theologically. He was afraid of dogma; "we are less liable," he said, "to be misled about moral duties than points of doctrine." But the great masters of Western mysticism were never afraid of committing themselves theologically. St. John of the Cross based himself on a granite foundation of theology and further steeped his private spiritual life in the sacramental and liturgical corporate life of the Church. For Wordsworth, the Church of England, even after he became a staunch Churchman, seems to have meant little more than a

spiritual tradition and an expression and guardian of the nation's spiritual life.

Yet—"Wordsworth and Newman; the two men for whom my love has been most like idolatry." So much that was in sharpest focus for Newman never came into focus at all for Wordsworth, but his spiritual gaze ranges where Newman's was not interested to explore and his insights were perhaps of the highest order to which a man may attain through the exercise of his natural powers. Between them, these two great men shaped English nineteenth century spirituality.

THE GHOST IN *HAMLET*: PAGAN OR CHRISTIAN?

By

I. J. SEMPER

IN A SCHOLARLY AND PROVOCATIVE ARTICLE Dr. Roy W. Battenhouse recently focused attention on the Ghost in *Hamlet*.¹ Although the word *purgatory* is never mentioned in *Hamlet*, commentators generally have interpreted the Ghost in terms of the Catholic doctrine of purgatory. However, some critics have expressed their misgivings concerning a soul who comes from purgatory to urge as a sacred duty what the Church condemns as mortally sinful. George Santayana underlined this difficulty when he wrote concerning the Ghost: "It is a Christian soul in Purgatory, which ought, in theological strictness, to be a holy and redeemed soul, a phase of penitential and spiritual experience; yet this soul fears to scent the morning air, trembles at the cock-crow, and instigates the revenging of crime by crime."² We will not quarrel with the Ghost's fear of the morning air or with his trembling at the cock-crow, because these are mere details which the poet borrowed from the ghostlore of his time for picturesque

¹ "The Ghost in *Hamlet*," *Studies in Philology* (April 1951), pp. 161-192.

² *The Works of George Santayana*, Triton ed. (New York, 1936), II, p. 211.

effect. But the charge that the Ghost "instigates the revenging of crime by crime" is crucial. In a word, a soul from purgatory on a mission of blood-vengeance is a contradiction in terms.

It is to the credit of Dr. Battenhouse that, unlike most modern critics who by-pass this problem, he attempts to solve it. He contends that the Ghost, far from being a soul from the purgatory of Catholic belief, "has all the marks of being from one of the several regions popularly confused with it in the Renaissance—the purgatory of the Ancients, or their hell, or their vague after-world hades" (p. 190). And he develops this thesis by three main arguments, which we may summarize as follows: first, the Ghost's description of his abode in the other world is more pagan than Christian not only because it does not accord with Dante's *Purgatorio*, in which the sufferers "are surrounded by music, inspiring sculptures, and beauteous angels" (p. 189), but also because it suggests the torments meted out in the infernal regions of the Greek and Roman world; second, the Ghost, in his other pronouncements, reveals himself as a vainglorious and vindictive character, who describes his sins from a naturalistic or pagan standpoint, who, although he mentions the last sacraments, evidently does not believe in them, and who, unconcerned about his own soul, never asks for prayers; and third, the Ghost is not considered as having come from purgatory by the other characters in the play.

In spite of the fact that Dr. Battenhouse argues his case with skill and erudition, I believe that an examination of the ghost-scenes in *Hamlet* will demonstrate that they were influenced by the purgatorial doctrine of the later Middle Ages, as formulated in the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas and, particularly, as outlined in two popular treatises: *The Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine and *The Supplication of Souls* of St. Thomas More. De Voragine compiled his Latin work about 1275. It became the most popular book of the Middle Ages. There were many editions in Latin, and also any number of translations. William Caxton published his translation in 1483, and his edition was reprinted as late as 1527. *The Supplication of Souls* first appeared in London in 1529, and it was reprinted in the edition of More's English Works, which was published in 1557. More wrote in the vernacular because he wanted to reach as many readers as possible. To assert that during Shakespeare's lifetime copies of these two

popular books were lying about in the homes of recusants in both Stratford and London is not to place an undue strain on probability.

In the closing scene of the first act of *Hamlet* the Ghost begins his long expository speech with a description of his abode in the other world; and of course any discussion of the nature of the Ghost should begin with an analysis of that description. The Ghost pictures his abode in the other world as a place of purification, consisting of "sulphurous and tormenting flames," to which he is condemned until "the foul crimes done in my days of nature/Are burnt and purged away." Here the emphasis is on fire as a cleansing agency, and this is in strict accord with the doctrine of purgatory as laid down by medieval writers. For instance, in the *Summa Theologica* (III, App. II, 2, ad 2) we read: "The chief purpose of the punishment of purgatory is to cleanse us from the remains of sin; and consequently the pain of fire only is ascribed to purgatory, because fire cleanses and consumes." De Voragine also dwells upon fire as a cleansing medium when he writes: "They that be middle good, be they that have with them something to be burnt and purged."¹ It should be noted that the words "burnt and purged" are echoed by the Ghost when he asserts that he must "fast in fires" until his sins "are burnt and purged away."

The Ghost's assertion that, if he were permitted to disclose the secrets of his prison house, he could unfold a tale steeped in horror, can be interpreted as stressing the intensity of the "tormenting flames." At any rate, the intensity of the purgatorial fire is a favourite topic with medieval theologians and hagiographers. Thus More represents the souls in purgatory as making this plea: "Finally, if ye pity any man in pain, never knew ye pain comparable to ours; whose fire as far passeth in heat all the fires that ever burned upon earth, as the hottest of all those passeth a feigned fire painted on a wall."²

Dr. Battenhouse, as we have noted, considers the Ghost's "urge to impress us with the sheer fright of his abode" as essentially pagan, because, in the first place, it is so out of harmony

¹ *The Golden Legend*, Caxton's translation, ed. F. S. Ellis (London, 1900), VI, p. 124. Quoted by permission of the publishers, J. M. Dent and Sons.

² *The Supplication of Souls*, in *The Works of Sir Thomas More* (London, 1557), p. 337. The spelling of quoted passages has been modernized.

with Dante's allegorical representation of purgatory, in which the sufferers are surrounded by such consolations as music, sculptures, and angels. When Dr. Battenhouse used the verb *surrounded*, it is obvious that his memory played him a trick. In the Purgatorio proper there are musicians suffering for their sins but no music; there are guardian angels on the stairways between the terraces but not on the terraces where the souls undergo their penitential discipline; there are sculptures on the first terrace only, where the penitents have neither the time nor the inclination to admire their beauty, inasmuch as they circle the terrace bearing heavy weights on their shoulders so that "the grievous nature of their torment doubles them to the ground." Moreover, Dante is orthodox in regard to the stress which he places on the intensity of the purgatorial fire. On the seventh terrace the side of the mountain belches forth "sulphurous and tormenting flames." Dante passes through this wall of fire, and thus does he record his experience: "As soon as I was in it I would have cast myself into boiling glass to cool me, so beyond measure was the burning there" (XXVII, 49-51).

Nor is it necessary to fall back upon the horrendous torments of a mythological Tartarus in order to clarify the secrets of the Ghost's prison house. If we must interpret his veiled words as referring to agonizing punishments over and above the "tormenting flames," we can find examples of such punishments in the purgatorial literature of the Christian era. In the Middle Ages it was a popular belief that the souls in purgatory were tortured by demons. Hence More did not scruple to put these words into the mouths of his supplicating souls: "... our keepers are such as God keep you from, cruel damned spirits, odious, envious, and hateful, despitious enemies and despiteful tormentors, and their company more horrible and grievous to us than is the pain itself and the intolerable torment that they do us, wherewith from top to toe they cease not continually to tear us" (pp. 337-338). More's sufferers are not pagans because they talk in this fashion, nor is the Ghost in *Hamlet* a pagan because he dwells on the terrifying aspects of his abode.

In assigning a definite locality to the abode of the Ghost Shakespeare followed medieval tradition. Thus the Ghost returns to his prison house by vanishing through a trapdoor into the cellar beneath the stage, an exit which led Hamlet to describe the

actor who played the part as "this fellow in the cellarage." Medieval writers located hell "in the low places under ground," and they made purgatory a suburb of hell. St. Thomas Aquinas advances as a probable opinion the view that, according to common law, "the place of purgatory is situated below and in proximity to hell, so that it is the same fire which torments the damned in hell and cleanses the just in purgatory; although the damned, being lower in merit, are to be consigned to a lower place" (*S.T.*, III, App. II, 2). The descent of the Ghost through a trapdoor in the floor of the stage, an exit usually reserved for demons, was a grotesque bit of stage business; but Shakespeare had no choice in the matter. The Ghost's departure for "the low places under ground" was in strict conformity with age-old theological opinion and pious conjecture.

After describing his abode the Ghost delivers his message to Hamlet and he makes certain disclosures concerning himself. One thing, however, he does not do, and that is to ask for prayers. Does this strange omission argue that he is more pagan than Christian? That Shakespeare was familiar with the doctrine that members of the Church on earth can aid the souls in purgatory is manifest from the prayer which he gives Ophelia: "God ha' mercy on his soul!/And of all Christian souls I pray God" (IV, v, 199-200). The second line, which is a prayer for the souls in purgatory, echoes a prayer which More introduced into the following lament by his supplicating souls: "We see our children too, whom we loved so well, pipe, sing, and dance, and no more think on their father's soul than on their old shoon—saving that sometime cometh out, 'God have mercy on all Christian souls!'" (p. 336). That Shakespeare was also familiar with the fact that the ever recurring motive for the return of souls from purgatory is the asking for prayers is shown by Horatio's adjuration to the Ghost to speak "If there be any good thing to be done/That may to thee do ease, and grace to me" (I, i, 130-131). It is true that Horatio advances other motives to explain the Ghost's return to earth—a foreknowledge of his country's fate, buried treasure to be revealed—but it should be emphasized that the lines which we have quoted express the very first supposition that springs to his mind when he questions the spirit of Hamlet's father.

To imply that a soul from purgatory must necessarily plead for prayers is to make no allowance for exceptional cases. The Ghost

in *Hamlet* comes not to plead for prayers but to command his son to revenge "his foul and most unnatural murder." However strange this punitive function may appear to us to-day, it is not entirely wanting in purgatorial narratives, legendary and otherwise, which have come down to us from the Middle Ages. A notable example of a soul from purgatory acting solely as a punitive agent occurs in *The Golden Legend*. De Voragine writes:

As Turpin the archbishop of Rheims saith, that there was a noble knight that was in the battle with Charles the Great for to fight against the Moors, and prayed one that was his cousin that if he died in battle, that he should sell his horse and give the price thereof to poor people. And he died, and that other desired the horse and retained it for himself. And a little while after, he that was dead appeared to that other knight, shining as the sun, and said to him, Cousin, thou hast made me to suffer pain eight days in purgatory, because thou gavest not the price of my horse to poor people, but thou shalt not escape away unpunished. This day devils shall bear thy soul to hell (VI, 127).

Shakespeare thus had a precedent for raising a soul from purgatory, not to plead for prayers, but to accomplish a punitive mission. It is urged, however, that the mission of the Ghost, with its stress on revenge as a duty, is the main reason why it is preferable to hold that he is an evil spirit from a pagan hades rather than a holy soul from the purgatory of Catholic belief. We admit that an unqualified command to revenge a murder can mean only blood-vengeance. As a matter of fact, however, the Ghost does qualify the command to revenge his murder by two solemn injunctions, which come at the end of his concluding speech: "But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,/Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive/Against thy mother aught" (I, v, 84-86). The words, "Taint not thy mind," constitute Hamlet an executioner akin to the hangman appointed by the State—not a blood-avenger in the ordinary sense. And just as the hangman appointed by the State must banish evil from his heart, even if the criminal has injured him; so Hamlet, who has every reason to hate the king, must not kill him *ex animo malo*—from motives of personal hatred.¹ The Ghost, therefore, comes not as a vindictive spirit from a pagan hades but as an agent of divine justice to

¹ For a more detailed treatment of this viewpoint, see my *Hamlet Without Tears* (Dubuque, 1946), pp. 19-22.

sanction the punishment of a villain, who is guilty of fratricide and regicide, crimes which seemed impossible for man to uncover and to bring to judgment.

At this point it is necessary to insist that this interpretation of the Ghost's mission does not mean that Hamlet, before he can kill the king, must be able to justify his act in the eyes of the Danish people or that he must be able to convict the king by a legal process. The Ghost forbids him to act as a private avenger but he does not bid him act as a public prosecutor. The premise of Shakespeare's tragedy is that the king has been judged and sentenced in the other world. It is Hamlet's duty to carry out the sentence, a duty which he always assumes that he can perform by using his sword or rapier. His commission recalls that of the ancient Israelites who, as private individuals, were commanded to exterminate the worshippers of the golden calf. Inasmuch as Shakespeare in his dramas makes seventeen references to the Book of Exodus, there is every reason to believe that he read the story of the golden calf. The command of the Lord took this form: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Put every man his sword upon his thigh; go, and return from gate to gate through the midst of the camp, and let every man kill his brother, and friend, and neighbour" (XXXII, 27). St. Thomas Aquinas, who teaches that only the lawfully constituted authorities of the State are delegated by God to put evildoers to death, admits that in the incident narrated in Exodus God gave this power to private individuals. He comments on the verse which we have quoted as follows: "Those, who at the Lord's command slew their neighbours and friends, would seem not to have done this themselves but rather He by whose authority they acted thus: just as a soldier slays the foe by the authority of his sovereign, and the executioner slays the robber by the authority of the judge" (*S. T.*, II-II, 64, 3, ad 2).

In addition to describing his abode and announcing his mission, the Ghost makes three disclosures concerning himself. Dr. Battenhouse calls attention to the praise which the Ghost lavishes upon himself, when he draws a contrast between himself and his brother, "a wretch whose natural gifts were poor to those of mine." This self-praise, he argues, hardly becomes a soul from purgatory. But, as Professor Levin L. Schücking has shown, this self-praise is merely a primitive and popular stage-device em-

played by Shakespeare to prevent the audience from confusing moral values.¹ This device was a practical necessity in an age when no programmes were distributed in the playhouse. In Shakespeare's dramas, therefore, a villain will openly proclaim his guilt and a virtuous character will indulge in self-praise. The Ghost is not an egoist. His self-complacency is one of the means used by the dramatist to label him an "honest ghost."

Nor should we regard the Ghost's statement that he is undergoing a purging of the "foul crimes done in my days of nature" as evincing "a pagan soul's understanding of hell." Rather they evince a Christian soul's profound horror of sin; and in this sense they are in character, that is, they are words which we would expect a soul from purgatory to speak. Of course he is viewing the sins which he committed upon earth *sub specie aeternitatis*.

Perhaps the most telling argument against the thesis that the Ghost is pagan stems from his poignant lament that he died without receiving the sacraments of the Church—the remedies against sin. After informing Hamlet how he was murdered, he sums up the case against his brother in these words:

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatched;
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled,
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.
O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!

(I, v, 74-80).

It is evident that the climax of this summary is reached in the line in which the Ghost laments that he died "Unhouseled" (uncommunicated), "disappointed" (unshriven), and "unaneled" (unanointed). Shakespeare thus manages to list the last sacraments in a single line, although for metrical reasons he does not follow the exact order of ministration—penance, viaticum, and extreme unction. Here it may be objected that if the Ghost is a soul from purgatory, confirmed in grace and assured of heaven, his stress on the non-reception of the last sacraments is pointless. If he has saved his soul, why does he complain? Again, we assert, the Ghost speaks in character. The *raison d'être* of purgatory is two-

¹ *Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays* (New York, 1922), p. 38.

fold: the purging of unforgiven venial sins and the expiation of the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven. The *raison d'être* of the last sacraments, in so far as their effects relate to purgatory, is to prepare the soul for its entry into eternity by a final cleansing, which will blot out the smallest imperfections and which will diminish the debt of temporal punishment. It is most fitting, therefore, that the Ghost, who speaks with authority on the intensity of his suffering, should exclaim with deepest emotion: "No reckoning made, but sent to my account/With all my imperfections on my head." Then there is another consideration. If our argument is valid that the Ghost is Christian, then Hamlet's father died in the state of grace, that is, free from the stain of mortal sin. But his murderer could not know that. And of course he did not care; in dispatching his brother in his sleep he took the chance of sending his brother's soul to hell. Little wonder is it that the Ghost ends the catalogue of the king's crimes with the line: "O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!" Here it may be pointed out that both the Quartos and the Folios, unlike many modern editions, give this line to the Ghost, and not to Hamlet.

The Ghost pays a moving tribute to the last sacraments, and hence to assert that he merely "mentions" them is to be guilty of understatement. Moreover, on the supposition that the Ghost is pagan, why should he even mention them? A "damned spirit" from the infernal regions of the ancient classical world who mourns because he died without receiving the last sacraments of the Catholic Church does not make sense to-day, and it is difficult to believe that a figure so utterly preposterous could have made sense in Renaissance England.

If we except Bernardo, who plays an insignificant role, three other characters in the play see the Ghost. These three are Marcellus, Horatio and Hamlet. It is obvious that their testimony cannot be disregarded when it is a question of determining whether the Ghost is pagan or Christian.

It would seem that Marcellus serves as the mouthpiece of Shakespeare by indicating at the very outset how we should regard the Ghost. Thus does he describe the effect of the mere appearance of the Ghost: "We do it wrong, being so majestical,/To offer it the show of violence" (I, i, 143-144). Like De Voragine's purgatorial phantom who appeared to his cousin "shining as the sun," so the Ghost appears to Marcellus and his

companions as a majestical being, the fitting representative of a higher power. Moreover, it is Marcellus who recommends the Ghost to us by associating him with the season "Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated."

In his attitude toward the Ghost Horatio cannot be separated from Hamlet. In the opening scene of the tragedy he is introduced as a scholar who is sceptical regarding spectres. At the end of the play scene he is converted to Hamlet's view that the Ghost comes from purgatory.

There can be no question that Hamlet, immediately after his interview with the Ghost, is firmly convinced that his father's soul is in purgatory. He blazons this belief when he associates the Ghost with the patron saint of Ireland: "Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,/And much offence too. Touching this vision here,/It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you" (I, v, 136-138). The significance of these lines becomes clear when we know that in the later Middle Ages St. Patrick, as the keeper of a purgatory on an island of Lough Derg in Donegal, was regarded as the outstanding witness to the existence of purgatory.¹ St. Patrick's Purgatory was a cave where through the intercession of the saint certain individuals were permitted to make their expiation. In his *Chronicles* (Book IV), a work with which Shakespeare was familiar in the translation of Lord Berners, Froissart describes the experiences of two English noblemen who spent the night in "the cave, called the Purgatory of St. Patrick." And De Voragine writes as follows: "Divers places are deputed to diverse souls for the prayers of some saint, as is read of S. Patrick that he impetred a place of purgatory in Ireland for some, of which the history is written tofore in his life" (VII, 115). Thus Hamlet, by invoking the name of St. Patrick, assures Horatio that the apparition which they have seen is not a masquerading demon from the hell of Christian faith or the underworld of pagan mythology but "an honest ghost," whose abode is purgatory.

After he invokes the name of St. Patrick Hamlet swears Horatio and Marcellus to secrecy with a threefold oath upon the cruciform hilt of his sword. As he asks them to swear each oath the voice of the Ghost, heard from beneath the stage, enforces each request with the word "Swear." This brief scene with which the first act closes has puzzled commentators, because during the

Cf. J. Dover Wilson, *Hamlet* (Cambridge, 1936), p. 164.

administration of the oaths Hamlet refers to his father's spirit as "this fellow in the cellarage," and he addresses him as "old mole," "truepenny," etc. The cellarage scene comes to an end when Hamlet, no longer in a flippant mood, speaks the beautiful line: "Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit." The important thing to note about Hamlet's levity is that it is aimed directly at the stage business, which, as we have already pointed out, is grotesque. Evidence has been adduced to show that Shakespeare's audience laughed when they saw the Ghost depart for his prison house by dropping through a trapdoor into the cellar beneath the stage.¹ And we may well believe that they also laughed when they heard his sepulchral voice from the cellar. Hamlet's reference to "this fellow in the cellarage" is clearly topical, for it directs attention to the actor in the cellar. For the moment the Ghost is forgotten. When topical allusion thus comes running in at the door, dramatic illusion flies out at the window. Perhaps as a concession to the merry mood of his spectators, Shakespeare shattered the dramatic illusion by poking fun at a crude piece of stage business, which he may have inherited from an earlier play by Thomas Kyd.

When we next meet Hamlet some time has elapsed since his interview with the Ghost. In his mood of deep melancholy, a mood which engenders scrupulosity, he is tortured by the doubt that the apparition may be a demon who has come to damn him. This doubt, which accounts for his delay in executing the command of the Ghost, is theologically justified; for the Church, fully recognizing the possibility of diabolic illusion, has always urged the utmost circumspection in dealing with spectres. However, the arrival of the strolling players at Elsinore provides Hamlet with an opportunity to resolve his doubt. He informs Horatio that he will have these players stage a play which will reconstruct the murder of his father, and he asks his friend to observe the king during the performance. If the king does not betray himself, then "It is a damnèd ghost that we have seen." The king does betray himself, and both Hamlet, who is scrupulous, and Horatio, who is sceptical, can now "take the ghost's word for a thousand pound." In other words, the apparition is "an honest ghost" from purgatory, as Hamlet claimed when at the end of the first act he invoked the name of St. Patrick.

¹ See Arthur Colby Sprague, *Shakespeare and the Actors* (Cambridge, Mass., 1945), p. 128.

The Ghost makes only one more appearance in the play, when in the closet scene (III, iv) he shows himself to Hamlet but not to Gertrude. His entry is highly dramatic, for he interrupts Hamlet at the climax of a tirade directed against the queen's sensuality and the king's perfidy. We see him through the eyes of Hamlet as a "gracious figure," clad not in armour but "in his habit as he lived," whose "piteous action" betrays the unutterable anguish of his soul. Nothing that he says or does conveys the slightest suggestion that he is an evil spirit from the underworld of the ancient pagans. He has a single speech of six lines. In the first two lines he repeats the "dread command" of the first act but he transforms it into a gentle reproof. In the last four lines he urges Hamlet to aid the queen in her struggle with her conscience.

Why does he administer only a mild rebuke as regards Hamlet's delay in killing Claudius? Why does he remain invisible and inaudible to the queen? And why is he so strangely agitated, as is indicated by Hamlet's expressions, "How pale he glares," and "piteous action"? We believe that all three questions can be answered in terms of the purgatorial theology of De Voragine and More.

In the section which he devotes to All Souls' Day (VI, 109-127), De Voragine narrates a number of instances involving souls from purgatory who appeared to living relatives and friends solely to thank them for their prayers. Now these personal missions presuppose that the souls in purgatory know what is passing on earth, and hence De Voragine quotes St. Augustine to the effect that the affairs of the living can be made known to the suffering souls by divine revelation, by angels, and by souls that pass from earth to purgatory. If the Ghost, therefore, is aware of his son's melancholy, scrupulosity and emotional instability, we can understand why in the closet scene he assumes the "gracious figure" of a father, and why he softens his "dread command" so that it almost becomes an entreaty.

That the souls in purgatory care for their loved ones on earth is the burden of a passage by More, in which he represents them as proclaiming that "our prayer is for you so fervent, that ye can nowhere find such affection on earth" (p. 338). When the Ghost appeared to Hamlet on the battlements he demonstrated his love for his faithless queen by forbidding his son to contrive against her. In the closet scene the four lines which express his pathetic

concern for her supply the reason why he does not appear to her: he wishes to spare her the shock. And in the line, "O, step between her and her fighting soul," he bids Hamlet aid her with spiritual counsel. In passing it may be remarked that Hamlet, in obeying the Ghost, assumes a role not unlike that of a father confessor. The affection of the Ghost for his wife and his son also explains his pitiful aspect, which so impresses Hamlet. In fine, the Ghost is still the ambassador of a higher power but with an agonizing solicitude for his erring wife and his irresolute son.

A study of the ghost-scenes in *Hamlet* in the light of current purgatorial doctrine corroborates the view which has been held by a long line of commentators and which has been summarized by Dr. John Dover Wilson in a single terse statement: "the Ghost is Catholic: he comes from Purgatory."¹ The theory that the Ghost rises from a mythological Tartarus does scant justice to Shakespeare's artistic achievement, inasmuch as it brackets his noble creation with the Senecan spectres of his predecessors. Shakespeare transmuted the traditional revenge-ghost of the Elizabethan stage by Christianizing him, and it is this transmutation which explains why the Ghost in *Hamlet* is so vastly superior to the revenge-ghosts of the past, a tribe of pallid and whining creatures, utterly devoid of spiritual significance. It is a measure of Shakespeare's greatness that he was able to write ghost-scenes which are dominated by a majestic visitant from the other world and which are charged with thrilling unearthly excitement.

¹ *What Happens in Hamlet* (New York, 1940), p. 70.

SELF-PORTRAIT OF A SAINT

By

BRUNO S. JAMES

THE CHARACTER OF SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX is of interest to others besides historians and hagiographers. His massive personality towers above the strong and stormy men of his age, above the turmoils and troubles of his time, like a rock in a rough sea. Eschewing all honour and preferment, he bestrode the world of his day, and few were able to withstand the force of his sanctity. The redoubtable Count William of Poitiers, the Emperor Lothair himself crumbled before it. Roger of Sicily held out for a time, but in the end he gave way. Louis le Jeune kicked against it but finally came to heel. Nor has his influence faded with his death, in every age since men have succumbed to it. Martin Luther could not resist it, even Edward Gibbon did not deny him a measured praise.

Our sources for the life of Saint Bernard are the contemporary biographies by his friends and disciples containing, according to Gibbon, "whatever friendship could recollect and superstition invent." In fact they show a power of sober judgment that is in advance of their age; yet they are the work of loving disciples, and love is not always clear-sighted. The authors were too near their subject to take a whole and objective view of him and to estimate him against the background of his time and in relation to his circumstances. Furthermore, before publication these biographies were submitted for approval to certain abbots of the Order. To complement these tributes of love and loyalty, to relieve the lifeless glitter of their unstinted if not unconsidered applause, we have the letters of the saint himself, documents not only valuable as a source for the history of his time but also for the living picture they give of their author. They are the spontaneous expression of a man torn by tempestuous emotions and yet always master of himself, of a man who in the seclusion of

his cloister carried the whole world upon his shoulders bowed down but not broken by the burden.

But even these letters must be used with judgment and common sense if we would arrive at a true estimate of the saint's character. In their antique idiom there is much to mislead if not to repel a modern reader. We are nearer the world of ancient Rome than the world of Saint Bernard; we understand more easily the letters of Cicero, the mind of the Roman is closer to us than the mind of the medieval saint. In the spontaneous and unrestrained letters of Saint Bernard our taste is sometimes shocked. He could not resist playing with words or the highly-coloured and exaggerated contrast. He was an artist in words, and in his treatises and sermons he is completely master of his material; but in his letters, although he achieves striking phrases that brand themselves on the memory, he sometimes nods. It was the fashion of his day to quote the Scriptures, but Bernard goes far beyond this, many of his letters are little more than a *pastiche* of Scriptural phrases. He knew the whole Bible by heart and his indignation found its natural expression in the burning phrases of Jeremias, his affection in the yearning languors of the Canticle, and his fears in the forebodings of Daniel and the prophets.

A striking characteristic of Saint Bernard is his constant self-depreciation. This note, too often struck for modern tastes, does not seem always to ring quite true, especially when it is accompanied by a tirade of denunciation that appears to accord ill with any distrust of self. It is hard to escape the feeling that, even if the saint did have such a poor opinion of himself, it were hardly necessary for him to have protested so much, to have insisted on it so often. But here, if there be any fault at all, it is the taste of the times that we must blame. Such expressions of self-abasement were expected, especially when the writer was addressing himself to some great personage. Men like Henry de Blois, men amongst whose virtues humility was not conspicuous, would often write of themselves in this way. And even some of us might feel embarrassed were we called upon to act in accordance with the expressions of affection, sincerity, obedience, and service with which we conclude our letters.

Surely Saint Bernard had a gift of invective unrivalled by any except perhaps Saint Jerome. "A serpent has deceived me! A double-faced, low-down, cunning wretch, void of all righteous-

ness, afraid of an interview, an enemy of his own conscience. . ."¹ he writes to Pope Eugenius; and to a cardinal in Curia: "Your legate has passed from country to country leaving everywhere amongst us the foul and horrid traces of his progress. . . ." But if we would estimate his character, if we would discover how far he was sincere in his protestations of self-contempt, we must consider his general attitude and behaviour on the many occasions when he was called upon to intervene in a crisis or solve some difficult question. And here we can have no doubts at all. His whole attitude was one of complete humility. He was outspoken and quite fearless when he considered the interests of the Church were at stake, when authority overreached itself whether it was the authority of the pope, the emperor, or the king, or when he thought that the rights of even the most humble person were violated, but never is there a hint of arrogance or self-righteousness. Never, even when his sense of justice was most outraged, did he speak *de haute en bas*, but always as one who had himself much to answer for, as a humble monk pleading for the poor of Christ or for his Church. We must always remember that the whole world was hanging on his words, that almost every day messengers were arriving from the Pope, or the Emperor, to consult him on high matters of state or doctrine. Yet even on what might be considered his special province, matters on which the rawest seminarist would nowadays believe himself entitled to speak with confidence if not with authority, he always gave his opinion with the utmost diffidence. Although he was acknowledged the most outstanding personality of the times, the most eloquent preacher, the most clear-headed thinker, yet it was only with the greatest reluctance that he could be persuaded to meet Abelard at Sens. Few men have ever received such widespread acclamation as Saint Bernard when he was preaching the Crusade. Wherever he went kings, princes, and the common people, cast themselves before him as a prophet of the Most High. And whatever we may think of his miracles, there is no doubt at all that he believed in them himself, and that others believed in them. He was acclaimed the leader of the Crusade and might easily have accompanied the expedition

¹ The quotations from the letters of Saint Bernard in this article are from the new translation of them now in the press and to be published by Burns and Oates.

surrounded by every mark of honour and veneration; no one would have thought the less of him had he done so, for there was the precedent of Peter the Hermit, and the story of that ill-fated venture might well have been different if he had been present, but as soon as he thought his work was done he turned his back on the world and returned to his monastery, not only without repine but with evident relief. Whatever the world thought of him, however much it might try to load him with honours, he never thought of himself as anything but a humble monk whose proper place was in his monastery dealing with the humble routine of daily monastic life.

Perhaps his most endearing characteristic, and one that we encounter time and again in his letters, was his forbearance. However hotly he might have denounced anyone, however gravely anyone might have fallen, let there be the slightest hint of a change of will, the smallest evidence of sorrow, and at once the saint would forget all his indignation and run to welcome back the prodigal. When a certain archbishop who had been deposed by the Pope, repented of his misdeeds and sought the help of the saint, Bernard immediately took up his pen to plead for him with the Pope, to beg that even if he could not be reinstated he might be allowed to retire with dignity and that his debts might be defrayed out of the revenues of his diocese. Monks who were in trouble and fearful of facing their abbots came, as a matter of course, to the saint in order to beg for his intercession on their behalf. Constantly we find him writing on behalf of some fugitive monk to ask that he might be received back and spared the punishments usual in such cases. There is one especially charming letter written in answer to the Countess de Blois who had begged the saint to use his influence with her rather wild and wayward son. Bernard writes back to say how sorry he is to hear that the young man was behaving so badly, but that one must not be too severe with him, for the faults to which he was prone were caused and in large part excused by the hot blood of youth. He suggests that kindness and understanding would be more likely to win him than any show of indignation or anger, and he concludes by saying that he personally had always found him most dutiful and obliging, "God bless him!" On the other hand there is no doubt that the saint was a little too ready to believe everything he was told, especially when the credit of his

own monks was at stake. During the acrimonious controversy over the York election into which the saint threw himself with all the ardour of his nature, there was certainly something to be said for the side he opposed. He could hardly find words bad enough for William FitzHerbert, the rival candidate to his own monk Murdach, and yet FitzHerbert died a saint. In the similar controversy over the Langres election, although there is no doubt that his opponents acted irregularly, it is hard to escape the suspicion that the saint was not altogether free from *parti pris*. The matter was settled by the consecration of a Cistercian, Bernard's own prior; but it is difficult to believe that the Cluniac rival was the complete wretch the saint believed him to be.

In a letter to Saint Hildegarde we see another side of the saint's character. Saint Hildegarde was a nun favoured by rather surprising revelations. She had written to Bernard to say that she had seen him in a vision "like a man in the sun." He may have believed in her, but he distrusted anything that seemed to flatter his self-esteem, and so the letter he wrote back was not encouraging: "If others like to believe me a better person than I know myself to be, that is due to stupidity and not to any virtues of mine." There was no credulity about Saint Bernard. When his friend Saint Norbert believed that he had received a revelation about the end of the world, Bernard questioned him closely and afterwards declared himself "not convinced."

When he is writing to his friends the saint gives full expression to his affectionate and sensitive nature. To one of his monks who had left Clairvaux to become abbot of a distant monastery and was finding the burden too much for him, he writes begging him not to be for ever writing of his troubles because it was quite bad enough to have to live apart from him without being worried about him. Then he writes again to say that after all he would prefer to know what was happening because otherwise, if he did not hear, he imagined all kinds of disasters. To a mother whose son had left her for Clairvaux he writes that for the one son she had lost she has found as many more as there are monks at Clairvaux, and that she need have no fears for the delicate health of her son because he would look after him like a father and make the rough places smooth for him. Part of the charm of these letters is in their vivid contrasts. On one page we find the

saint advising the Pope on high matters of state and on the next pleading for a poor man who had lost his pigs. Nor are they lacking in wit and humour, we see it flashing here and there in almost every letter, glinting, more often than not, on the point of a rapier. To a rather stingy bishop he writes that he is sending him something better than he deserves, and then explains that he is sending him a young man to eat his bread so that he can discover how mean he is. Unfortunately he can't find his seal, he must have put it down somewhere, but his lordship will recognize whom this letter is from by the way it is expressed. Evidently the humour of Saint Bernard was well known to his friends. But it is impossible to do justice to the many-sided character of Saint Bernard as it is revealed in his letters. His rich ardour defies analysis in a brief study.

No one who has studied the character of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux can fail to ask himself why we no longer produce men of his calibre nowadays. The answer surely is that we are living in a bureaucratic age, and the atmosphere of a sleek bureaucracy, of a highly centralized machine, whatever its other advantages may be, is not propitious for the growth of strong and towering personalities. When we do produce them they are outside and aligned with the forces of destruction.

REVIEWS

A SELF-MADE MYTH

Tito Speaks, by Vladimir Dedijer (Weidenfeld and Nicolson 21s).

PRESIDENT TITO'S APOLOGIA is not designed to placate. It is conceived in a mood of deep self-satisfaction and defiance. Tito got out of a number of scrapes, he is surrounded by hero-worshippers, and he believes he is now sufficiently secure in a position which few cool observers envy him, to issue a pronouncement to the world. It is to be hoped that his Tory admirers will read it patiently. Unhappily considerable patience is required. Inevitably it abounds in technical terms of Communist philosophy and organization which make it hard-going for the lay reader. The writing is devoid of literary distinction. (No translator's name is given.) The construction is uncouth. Tito begins the task himself but wearies after ninety-one

pages. This "Worker," as is shown in the text, regarded every job as an invitation to down tools, and he soon hands it over to Mr. Dedijer, an intimate, to finish. Mr. Dedijer also employs the first person singular, at the same time incorporating large extracts from Tito's draft preserving the original "I." It is, therefore, not a book to dip into. Far too much of the ample space is given to Tito's public statements, far too little to the narrative of his personal adventures. All this is regrettable because at the core of the work there lies an exciting and significant story.

Tito was brought up in the "bad home" of the typical delinquent. His father drank, brothers and sisters sickened and died, his uncle stole his boots. Later he worked as a locksmith, acquired some skill in general metalwork, and drifted about Europe fomenting ill-feeling against his various employers. After an inglorious army career in the first World War (he was saved from court martial only by perjury) he was wounded in the back and taken for the first time to Russia as a prisoner of war. He returned home to the newly created Kingdom of Yugoslavia, resumed his vocation of agitator, and in 1923 joined the Communist Party. From then until 1941 his life followed the course that has lately become familiar from countless popular narratives. He moved all over Europe with forged papers and under aliases so numerous that on one occasion he found himself unable to remember the name on the particular passport he was carrying. He did time in prison and waxes naïvely indignant about the "Terror" of the royal régime. Since assassination has always been a feature of Balkan public life and was successfully employed by his comrades on more than one occasion, and since he admits that one of his tasks was to prepare for an uprising with secret stores of arms, one is amazed at the leniency of his treatment. The Yugoslav police were vigilant and (in comparison with the courts) severe, and by 1938 the party was almost extinct. Its controlling members lived in Vienna and Moscow. Tito had two important achievements at this period. He successfully sent 1,500 compatriots "underground" to the International Brigade. Of these 300 survived to join him in Yugoslavia and to play a decisive part in his war effort. Of the second achievement he is more reticent. The head of the Yugoslav party at this time was an emigré named Gorkic, who was put over his head, much to his chagrin, by the authorities in Moscow. Tito obediently submitted although, he now states, he then believed him to be a police informer. In 1937 Gorkic was suddenly arrested in Moscow (and presumably murdered) on the usual charges of treachery. Who denounced him? Tito stepped into his shoes and returned home to purge and reorganize what was left of the party. He boldly carried out the policy he had advocated; that the head of the party must stay on the spot. By 1941

he had re-established a number of "cells" in various parts of the country.

From April 1941, when the Germans invaded, until July 1943, when Mr. Deakin, an intrepid Oxford don, dropped in to establish the British Military Mission, Yugoslav history remains dark.

Mr. Deakin found in existence a Resistance Movement which could without absurdity be called an army. This force began its activity in June 1941 when Russia was attacked. Tito ingenuously asks his readers to believe that the coincidence was fortuitous. On the day when, in a phrase which Mr. Churchill would now perhaps like to forget, "Yugoslavia found her soul," Tito was absent. The army Mr. Deakin found was scattered physically but under unified Communist control. It comprised four elements: the veterans from Spain everywhere in key positions; the very young who had left their class-rooms and for two years lived in conditions of savagery; a large number of non-political patriots who had enrolled in the nearest organization that offered resistance to the invaders; and conscripts from the "liberated" areas. Of these those who were not caught and shot deserting, quickly caught the enthusiasm of their fellows. The losses of this force, largely from privation and disease, had been great. Those who survived were united in a formidable *esprit-de-corps*. What happened in those two years? We shall never know. Those who could have told us are dead. Tito had two aims: to cause as much annoyance as possible to the invaders in order to relieve the pressure on Russia and to exterminate the two sections of his countrymen, Croat separatists and Serbian royalists, who envisaged a different régime from his in the event of victory. Loyalty to Russia was the overriding emotion. The young partisans, as he describes, died with the name of Stalin on their lips.

Since our own troops have been in conflict with guerillas in Malaya we are disposed to take a less romantic view than formerly of his type of warfare. Tito speaks of "Offensives," and of "brigades" and "divisions" "breaking through." We must rather think of periodic punitive "sweeps" in a terrain well suited to the escape of small unencumbered bands; of a country brutally plundered and victimized by all sides; of betrayals and reprisals and devastation on an appalling scale. The people who survived the anarchy were in no position to pick and choose among their rulers; anything for a stable rule.

The book under review tells very little of the unhappy history of the British Military Mission. The best comment is Himmler's,—like calling to like across embattled Europe—"I wish we had a dozen Titos in Germany," he said in September 1944. "The man had nothing, nothing at all. He was between the Russians, the British and the Americans, and had the nerve actually to fool and humiliate the British and Americans in the most comical way."

Party ideologues are now disputing the question: "Who liberated Yugoslavia?" Russians and partisans claim exclusive honours. There was good reason for Allied ineffectiveness; Tito's consistent hostility. With frankness that must be disconcerting to many, he admits that he would have regarded an Allied landing as a hostile invasion. He describes in detail the precautions he took to keep secret from those who thought themselves his friends, his flight from Vis to Moscow in the summer of 1944. The people of Split and Dubrovnik were aghast to see the crew of a British cruiser and a brigade group ostentatiously insulted by gangs of prematurely adult boys and girls armed with British tommy-guns. And all the time Allied propaganda was churning out misinformation about Tito's aims and character.

Considerable space is given to the manoeuvres by which Tito achieved recognition for his communist régime after the war. Whatever face was saved for the Allies by the compromise, they immediately lost. In 1946 Yugoslavia settled down as part of the Russian hegemony. The main substance and central theme of this book is Tito's subsequent dismissal and survival. This is the story Tito has been longing to tell and here the interests of the Western reader is likely to flag unless he (or more probably she) suffers from the prevalent monomania which makes reading a form of rumination. These readers will devour any and every book which feeds their obsession, savouring every repetition. More sophisticated readers may well be bored. There are two hundred pages of it, all no doubt of titivating novelty in Belgrade, but sad stuff to us who have been glutted with the confessions of repentant dupes and liars. It is no news to us that Stalin was a blackguard and his rule intolerable. For nearly two hundred and fifty pages we have borne with Tito's monotonous denunciation of everyone who crossed his path, as a traitor and a spy. Now the nozzle is directed at him; he squirts back. The exchange is less than enthralling.

Tito's simple thesis is that the whole communist world is out of step except himself; that Stalin has "deviated" from the pure doctrine of Marx and Lenin and that Belgrade is the New Rome. But Mr. Dedijer is not quite up to the very special pleading required to make his case plausible. The truth peeps through everywhere that there is no real difference in philosophy or policy. It is purely a matter of personalities. Stalin decided to destroy Tito and for a variety of reasons has not yet succeeded. The method of destruction first chosen was ingenious. There are many good reasons for the federation of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. Tito would not object to being their joint President. But the government of Bulgaria is purely a Soviet creation imposed on a defeated nation. The NKVD reigns there supreme. Tito had his own secret police and the efforts of the NKVD to establish itself in Yugoslavia had not been entirely successful. Once Tito's solid little

gang of war-time comrades had been diluted with Bulgarians, he could have been despatched in the regular way. But Tito had observed and assisted in too many "purges" to be caught so easily. He knew that by breaking with Russia he would be increasing the destitution of his unhappy country which was completely dependent on Russia for her welfare and development. Once before he had been faced with a similar less drastic choice. In 1944 UNRRA came with help to his starving people. As in every other country they stipulated that their own officials should distribute supplies. This would have meant that at the crucial time when Tito was consolidating his power there would be independent observers to see his manner of doing so. It would have meant, too, that relief would go impartially to all in need. Tito had drawn up a scale of precedence which insured that only those he favoured would benefit. (The present writer saw a copy of this scale.) Rather than allow UNRRA its essential right, Tito repudiated all relief. Better the people should starve than that he should suffer any diminution of authority. But his bluff succeeded and he got the provisions on his own terms. In March 1948 it was not a fraction of authority that was at stake but his very existence; it scarcely seemed possible that the West, once duped, would trust him a second time. But Tito did not hesitate for long. His little gang, all save two, stood by him, and incalculably the Western powers began to shower him with subsidies and offers of friendship.

Why did the Russians wish to dispense with him? This kind of cannibalism is, of course, endemic in the communist system. Moreover there seems everywhere (as shown by the electorate in France and Britain) a disposition to overthrow war-leaders at the height of their triumph. But in Tito's case there was a further personal cause. He plainly bored them all unendurably by his boasting. *Tito Speaks* suggests the eagerly awaited breaking of a long silence, as though by an Eastern mystic after years of solitary contemplation. In fact Tito has never ceased speaking. Again and again in the latter chapters of this book we are told that Tito, addressing some congress, began by rehearsing the history and triumphs of the Yugoslav Army of Liberation. It seems to be his normal warming-up before any utterance, and no doubt it was extremely tedious to comrades like Bierut who have no such achievements to proclaim.

The book ends as it began with what is plainly meant to be an appealing human portrait. We hear of Tito's love of his dog, the warmth and gentleness of his blue eyes, his simple plebeian tastes. We are told he is much in demand as godfather to infants. It is not stated whether he attends the service and vicariously demands Faith. There is little in the book (beyond the stock, often refuted, accusations against Cardinal Stepinac) about the Church. Tito ascribes his

theological vacuum to an early cuffing from a priest whom he had served at the altar. There is, however, another recorded memory. Tito was a very greedy little boy and he grudged the small alms which his mother occasionally gave to the Friars. It is significant that, although portly himself, Tito seldom mentions a priest without the pejorative epithet "fat." No doubt psychologists could explain much of his zest for starving out religious to the early horror of seeing good food going to a good case.

Tito never allows himself the pleasure of a single chivalrous word about an opponent. Even Stalin, no Bayard, was shocked by his grossness in this matter. There is, however, an evident attempt in this book to change the myth of the bandit chief for that of the "Big Brother" of George Orwell's 1984.

His present position is precarious. It would be ironical if we found ourselves involved in a Third World War in his defence. Is there any further danger in "Titoism"? There is indeed. Everywhere except in the bazaars and jungles of Asia and Africa communists are losing faith in Russia. Russia is the one land in which a whole generation has grown up without knowledge of God and the humanities. Power politics and "purges" are the sickening fruit of the process. Man without God is less than Man. But there is an evident danger that the true sequence of cause and effect may be neglected. Observers point out that Stalin was merely the old Czar writ large; that there is something in Russian character naturally sympathetic to tyranny; that there is nothing wrong with Communism, merely with Russia. Such a view is acceptable alike to Tory opportunists and to sentimental Marxists. That way lies the promise of further disaster.

EVELYN WAUGH

RECOLLECTIONS OF A DIPLOMAT

The Ruling Few. Memoirs of Sir David Kelly, G.C.M.G., M.C.
(Hollis and Carter 25s).

SOME EIGHTY YEARS AGO there was a curious discussion brought about by a demand for the abolition of the diplomatic corps. It was urged that the expense involved in maintaining permanent representatives in foreign capitals was wasteful and that it would be better to send a Cabinet Minister to St. Petersburg or to Paris whenever important negotiations needed to be undertaken. Even those who held that permanent envoys might be usefully maintained in the larger European capitals questioned the necessity or the advisability of keeping them at Darmstadt or at Berne.

When Sir David Kelly entered the Diplomatic Service it was still reckoned a branch of the Royal Household, not yet having been

absorbed into the Civil Service. It was, he says, though possibly with a note of exaggeration, mainly recruited from Etonians and he harps a little too frequently on the supposed disadvantages which he felt both as an undergraduate and as an aspirant to the Diplomatic Service in consequence of his having been educated at a London day school. However, such disadvantages as he may have experienced were of his own making, for at Oxford he voluntarily chose to go to Magdalen, the most fashionable of the Colleges. Yet St. Paul's School brought with it compensating advantages of which not the least was that it drew him into contact with the man who more than any other was to influence his life, Richard Johnson Walker, son of Frederick Walker, the distinguished High Master of that school. Brilliant, wealthy and eccentric, "Dick" Walker was one of the most remarkable English converts to Catholicism which the present century has known. For a brief period it looked as though his residence, Little Holland House, Kensington, might become a centre of intellectual Catholic life in London. But after the First World War the owner went to live abroad and the prospect was not realized. Long automobile excursions on the Continent and in North Africa in Walker's company laid the foundations of Sir David's extensive knowledge of foreign countries which was completed by his diplomatic career.

Between 1919 when he joined the Diplomatic Service and 1951 when he retired, Sir David served in three Continents with three interludes at the Foreign Office. The inter-war period saw him in Argentina, Portugal, Mexico, Belgium, Sweden and Egypt, where he was during the difficult negotiations leading up to the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936. He passed the period of the Second World War first as Minister in Switzerland and later as Ambassador to Argentina. The post-war years saw him as Ambassador first at Ankara and then at Moscow. By way of welcome contrast to the inferior quality of so many of the volumes of memoirs which have appeared of late, Sir David has in the case of each foreign country in which he has served much that is of value to say about social and political conditions. We feel that we understand modern Portugal better when he tells us how at an official reception at Lisbon he "saw officers in their gala uniforms surreptitiously removing chickens from the buffet and thrusting them into their tail pockets to take home to their families." We grasp better modern Turkey's distrust of foreign capital when we are reminded that the zigzag course taken by Turkish railways may not be unconnected with the fact that the foreign capitalists who financed them were paid on a basis of so many francs per mile. But in the chapter on Turkey the author reveals himself not only as a diplomat but as a man with keen antiquarian interests.

Sir David is not unaffected by the ethical aspects of his profession.

He holds that an Ambassador should make out the best case he can for the government he represents, though in cases of serious disagreement with it he should resign. In early youth the author was made by an Ulster nurse to spit and stamp on Gladstone's tomb in Westminster Abbey, but on growing up he became a Tory Home Ruler in connection with which he reminds us that Cecil Rhodes once gave £10,000 to Redmond. Unsympathetic towards modern revolutions Sir David is inclined to attribute them largely at least to the loss of faith in itself by a governing class. But surely an exaggerated self-confidence has been a more fruitful cause.

The Ruling Few is a book of real memoirs, being drawn from the store-house of the author's own memory. Well-stocked as this memory is, it appears, if only on rare occasions, yet sometimes to have failed him. One such occurs on p. 186, where in relating the singular episode of the offer of the Albanian Crown to Lord Inchcape, the ex-Ambassador seems to suppose that the Prince of Weid's occupancy of that throne took place during the 1920's whereas it really belongs to the early part of the year 1914. On p. 253, the author's topographical recollections seem a little hazy; for he sets out to motor from Jerusalem to Bethlehem by way of Nazareth regardless of the fact that Bethlehem and Nazareth lie in diametrically opposite directions from Jerusalem.

The longest section of the book and the one which to most readers will have the greatest interest is that concerned with Russia. Here the personal element is less in evidence, but we have a lucid account of Soviet institutions. As regards the future much depends on Stalin's successor and at present there seems no-one capable of replacing him. But we must remember that there was a time when Trotsky seemed to be the inevitable successor of Lenin, yet Stalin whom none thought of in that capacity emerged from the background. Even a guidebook published in 1927, three years after Lenin's death, does not mention the humble two-roomed cottage in which Stalin was born, now a centre of devout pilgrimage.

With perhaps the exception of a somewhat dreary and uninspiring chapter on the First World War these memoirs of an intelligent and high-principled public servant may be classed among the few present-day books which will repay reading from cover to cover.

HUMPHREY J. T. JOHNSON

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

Saint Francis Xavier, by James Brodrick, S.J. (Burns and Oates 30s).

THIS NEW LIFE, well presented and illustrated, supersedes its English predecessors from the once classical Coleridge to the little jewel of Margaret Yeo. A bibliography is wanting, but in his footnotes

Fr. Brodrick quotes eleven out of more than seventy books and articles which I published with new material about our saint; in vain I looked for my *St. Francis Xavier* (St. Louis—London, 1928), for which I used the General Archives of the Society of Jesus, and the *Zeitgenössischen Quellen* (Leipzig 1932), in which I gave a descriptive catalogue of over 6,000 contemporary, mostly unpublished, original documents, which I found in the Lisbon archives and elsewhere, indispensable for a scientific Life of the Apostle of India and Japan. The basis of the work, as is stated in the Preface, is my critical edition of the *Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii* (Rome, 1944–1945), so much so, that some chapters are more a series of extracts from the letters of the saint and his companions and of texts from Portuguese chroniclers and later travellers than a coherent narrative of the events. Besides, the missionary labours of the other members of the Society and his friends, the Franciscans, are either entirely omitted or only hinted at in a few lines, so that the picture remains incomplete and many actions of the saint are not sufficiently explained. If the book for these and other reasons cannot be called the definitive Life of St. Francis Xavier, it still denotes a marked progress in Xaverian literature and, written in the author's brilliant, at times humorous and very personal style, makes for very entertaining reading.

During my recent journey from Bombay to Cape Comorin Fr. Brodrick's book was read in all the refectories of our colleges and the judgments were divided. Many would have liked a comprehensive chapter on the saint, his character and his inner life, others were shocked by the iconoclastic indulgence of the author, others remarked that whilst smashing old dear legends the Father was creating new ones, e.g., about the voyages of Fr. Schurhammer to the Moluccas and Japan. The Parava scholastics were smiling at the wild elephants and crocodiles roaming about on the sands of their Fishery Coast; the Malabarians were astonished to hear that their Zamorim had turned Moslem; the Goans protested that their Konkani should be classified amongst the Dravidian languages. I myself had to shake my head from time to time during my annual retreat at Poona and elsewhere, when I heard that Miguel, the saint's brother, was already dead in 1535 (he died on the 12th February, 1542); that Xavier was, perhaps, a disciple of Buchanan; that he went to Rome across the Sabine mountains; that in Lisbon he rubbed shoulders with Cingalese princes, Indian rajas, and even an occasional negro bishop; that the Socotrians could not have been descendants of converts made by St. Thomas, because their prayers were in Chaldean, a Nestorian language; that Albuquerque took Ormuz from the Turks; that Xavier probably never visited Ceylon; that he went on foot to S. Thomé; that he did not dismiss Mansilhas; that he baptized many Malay babies on Moro;

that the Japanese Laurence was an ex-clown, etc., etc. But I consoled myself with the thought that the book would be soon sold out and these minor errors could be easily corrected in a second edition.

Fr. Brodrick shows a praiseworthy critical spirit and he likes strong expressions in praise and blame, even where sometimes a middle way, a scholastic distinction would not have been out of place. So he condemns the authors who regard the vows of Montmartre as the foundation of the Society, but amongst these authors is also Bobadilla, one of the first Ten; and he ridicules the statement of Mendes Pinto, that the Portuguese in Bungo spread their mantles on the ground for Francis to squat upon them, though the fact is proved from other sources. His critical spirit leaves little room for miracles, though he does not deny them all. I am of the opinion that such a complicated question as that of the miracles of St. Francis Xavier cannot be solved in a few lines or footnotes. For instance, Fr. Brodrick says that the two cases of second sight, where Xavier saw in Ternate the contemporaneous death of Araujo and John Galvano, are proved beyond dispute; but Galvano died seven months before the Father's arrival on that island. And as for the so-called miracle of the crab, I am sure, if Fr. Brodrick had read all the material I have at my disposal, he would never have followed Fr. Peeters in his judgment about the untrustworthiness of Fausto Rodrigues.

Our author, who repeatedly defends Xavier against Catholic and Protestant biographers alike, and extols his saintliness, nevertheless tries to show also his human side, his defects and limitations. The endeavour is to be praised, but, I am afraid, he sometimes finds such where there are none. So the text: "Donde [not: De donde] nunca em seus dias conhecera molher," is not execrable, but good Portuguese, and cannot mean: "From which time." A few pages later Fr. Brodrick says that the saint burst a blood-vessel when repelling a carnal temptation, but it was only a dream and Xavier did not spring from his couch on that occasion. It is also wrong to say that he imprudently visited in Rome the house of a woman of scandalous reputation. In Paris Xavier did not change his room in order to flee from Ignatius, and the latter did not postpone Francis's retreat for fear that his ardour would outrun his discretion. Fr. Brodrick finds in the saint no flash of family affection and doubts whether he ever wrote to his mother, and finds in him no sense for beauty in nature or art. The fact that letters to his mother are not extant does not prove that he did not write them. Besides, we know that Francis wrote often to his brother Juan and to his cousin Martin, and many lovers of art and nature do not commit to their letters their affection.

As for the intellectual qualities of Francis, it is certain that he took the degree of M.A. As to the statement that no one thought of inviting

him to dispute before the Pope, because no one considered him to be an intellectual, four Jesuits used to carry on such disputations in 1538. Was Xavier one of them? We do not know. If not, this is explained by his extreme exhaustion, testified by Rodrigues. One of the four was Faber, who only got the twenty-fourth place in the licentiate, whilst Xavier got the twenty-second. According to Gonfalonero, Master Francis distinguished himself in the first disputation before Paul III, and Ignatius sent him in the same year, 1537, to the most famous of all the Italian universities, Bologna. Besides, the disputations in Yamaguchi, of which I published the text, show that he knew his Aristotle well and that the bonzes feared him alone.

As for the salvation of the pagans and Moors, Xavier held the common doctrine of the Church, that they could be saved by observing the natural law, which the Creator imprinted in their hearts. That he tried to get a good knowledge of the religions in his mission-fields is proved by his letters about Japan. He sent the first notices about Shintoism and the birth, life and death of Buddha to Europe. He tried to get a knowledge of what the bonzes taught in their universities and in their Sacred Books, and he succeeded so well that he could refute each Buddhist sect from their own teachings. In India he tried the same, but with less success. It was not his fault that the Brahmins in Trichendur, where he went, were not learned people, that they kept their Sacred Books and the language in which these were written, secret. When his friend, the bishop, finally got hold of some of these books and the Jesuits in Goa after many vain attempts found somebody to translate them, Xavier had already left India for China and Japan, not without having got information about the esoteric teachings of the disciples of the Vaishnavite Mâdhva. Fr. Brodrick underestimates the knowledge which the Portuguese, and with them Martin Afonso de Sousa, had of real India: they were extremely well-informed, as many of my unpublished documents prove. And as for Xavier's knowledge of Chinese religion and civilization, it was much more than a few generalities picked up casually in Japan. About both he got the most detailed information through the letters of the captive Portuguese in Kwangsi and orally through one of them, Manuel de Chaves, as I shall show in my forthcoming Life.

GEORG SCHURHAMMER

THE CHURCH AND STATE-SOVEREIGNTY

The Two Sovereignties, a Study of the Relationship between Church and State, by Joseph Lecler, S.J. (Burns and Oates 16s).

CATHOLICS are often tempted to complain that the criticisms levelled at them reveal an unpardonable ignorance of what they really believe. The fault is quite often their own, due to their failure

to explain themselves in terms which their contemporaries can understand. And this is true, if anywhere, in the sphere of the relations between Church and State and of the allied questions of religious freedom and toleration. Père Lecler has done his co-religionists a good service in bringing into the daylight what may seem to many the obscure and inscrutable principles at the back of Catholic thought and action in many of the burning questions of the day.

His method, too, should appeal to the English reader. He is no arm-chair metaphysician, weaving theories of exquisite and precise pattern, but a practical historian whose studies of particular phases of his subject have been appearing periodically now for many years and are models of careful scholarship. Nothing is so striking as the ease with which he ranges over the whole panorama of Church history to pick out an example here, a dictum there, as he explains the basic relations between Church and State or describes what those relations actually were at the different epochs. Particularly interesting is the last chapter (nearly one-third of the whole) on the Lay State, certain forms of which he shows not necessarily to fall under the Papal condemnation of the "Separation of Church and State."

But useful as the book should prove to those who are sincerely puzzled by the anomalous position of the Catholic Church in the shifting welter of modern States to-day, it will be most appreciated by Catholics themselves, many of whom have been disturbed by such accusations as that the Vatican is merely a rival to the Kremlin for world domination. In this country, the peculiar relations existing between the Church of England and the State reduce the question of "Church and State" to a matter of manœuvring and of decorous compromise—ultimate principles have little play in the debate. What those principles are, how far they have been realized or not realized in the various historical situations of the past, whether they are better appreciated and actualized now than heretofore, how naïve is the charge of world domination—these are all questions which can only be answered with an historical background covering the whole of Europe and the New World itself, and with an understanding of the ethos and tradition of the Catholic Church. This book provides just such a background and such an understanding. Incidentally it serves as a corrective to the illusion of our one day being able to reduce the two sovereignties to a unity—in either direction; the four pages of the admirable Conclusion (which might well be read first before any study of the book) remind us that the inevitable tension between them is but part of our earthly condition and that, as St. Augustine saw it, the City of God is not destined to reach its completion on this earth.

The translation by Father Hugh Montgomery is a real achievement. Not altogether flawless, perhaps, but a pleasure to read, and free from

the stiffness and awkwardness which an intricate study often assumes when clothed in another tongue. The publishers have helped by the good presentation of the book (a few misprints prevent unqualified congratulations). Two *desiderata*: the restoration of the bibliography, which could at the same time be usefully supplemented by references to the studies which have appeared since 1944 (when the book was first published); and, secondly, a full analytical index in place of the bare table of contents—this would validly excuse the absence of a general index, and might even be preferable. These can be supplied, together with the few necessary corrections, in the second edition, which the quality of the book should not be long in requiring.

MAURICE BÉVENOT

SHORTER NOTICES

The Collected Works of Abbot Vonier. Three vols. Revised Edition (Burns and Oates 25s each vol.)

THE LATE ABBOT VONIER, besides his intense activity spiritual and the building of Buckfast Abbey, wrote fifteen books, of which ten are here reprinted. They cover practically the whole field of Catholic theology, and this has involved a certain, very small, amount of re-editing, since repetitions were inevitable, especially as the Abbot did not himself arrange his books into a systematic conspectus of theology. The first volume is entitled *The Incarnation and Redemption*; the second, *The Church and the Sacraments*; the third, *The Soul and the Spiritual Life*. His avowed objective was the "instruction and edification" of the "ordinary Catholic," and in so far as this was so, we think he wrote or published far too much, and pursued his subjects into distances so remote that few, save those who are willing to apply their mind with great intensity to his books, would be able or willing to follow him. It seems to us that in all such instruction a teacher's aim ought to be to eliminate all save what is necessary. On the other hand, his own enthusiasm and warmheartedness carry the reader forward as the ordinary theological text-book cannot do. We hold that all theological teaching should move not only the intellect but the will. Presumably a lecturer can love even mathematics: but many a theological treatise resembles all too closely pure mathematics. It is impossible that in a work of this length everything should win the assent of all; and we are not sure that Abbot Vonier did not tend to say that this or that is "of faith," whereas it is still a matter for speculation

(e.g., about the Angels, or Purgatory). But in these disheartening days it is good to read pages that are so full of the sense of the Christian Triumph.

The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption, by H. E. W. Turner (Mowbrays 12s 6d).

IT HAS TO BE CONFESSED that this is a disappointing book. The subject is one of first importance and the author is well-known for his ability and erudition. Yet somehow one finishes the book with a sense of its thinness and unreality. Perhaps the explanation is that Professor Turner is attempting too much. To compress within less than 120 not very large pages a discussion of the development of the doctrine of the Redemption from the Apostolic Age to the time of Augustine is clearly a task calling for more than learning. In fact, the book as it stands is little more than a note-book on which a full scale study might be based.

Francis Thompson and Wilfrid Meynell. A Memoir by Viola Meynell (Hollis and Carter 18s).

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT BOOK for all admirers of Francis Thompson's poetry, for the death of her father has allowed Viola Meynell to delve into the large collection of letters which had been stowed away in Wilfrid Meynell's library at Greatham and thus throw new light on Thompson's character and his relations with Alice Meynell and Coventry Patmore. Due to these hitherto unpublished letters and to the intimate knowledge which Viola Meynell was privileged to have of the poet, the portrait of Francis Thompson does emerge with great vividness from these pages. They show him as a lonely, tormented man who had few friends, and as a mystic who was resigned to not experiencing the joys of earthly love. Miss Meynell quotes Thompson as saying: "Provided I were united with a woman's spirit I would be content to wait for her body till I could be united with it on the same terms—i.e., as a *spirit*, when it was assumed to the dignity of its soul. I recognize that on earth it may not be so for many." These lines explain much of the obscurity of certain of Thompson's poems and place his relations with Alice Meynell on an understandable basis. The strange story of Francis Thompson's life, however, remains tinged with tragic undertones.

Although this memoir deals mainly with the friendship between Thompson and Wilfrid Meynell, the other literary personalities which made up the intimate Palace Court coterie sometimes tend to eclipse the two main characters. The potent yet often enigmatic presence of Alice Meynell herself still teases the curiosity of the reader. What was

the secret of this sibylline poetess whose intellect and charms so ensnared three such different men as Francis Thompson, Coventry Patmore, and George Meredith? Viola Meynell, her daughter, tries to explain that her mother, apart from her love for her family, was essentially a solitary genius. But her letters to both Thompson and Patmore are often full of feminine enchantments, and we know that she was tormented by inner conflicts—witness her poems. Coventry Patmore, too, was so strong and fiery a temperament that his visits to Palace Court made a tremendous impact upon the Meynell household. Indeed, Miss Meynell's chapter dealing with the deep, soul-searching friendship between Patmore and Thompson is one of the best passages in her book.

Amid this galaxy of poetic genius, the personality of Wilfrid Meynell emerges as that of a kindly, eminently practical man who devoted his life to fostering talents greater than his own; and his discovery of Francis Thompson and the manner in which he nursed the poet's great gifts remain his most enduring memorial.

The Two Voices. Spiritual conferences of Fr. R. H. J. Steuart, S.J., with a memoir by Fr. C. C. Martindale, S.J. (Burns and Oates 18s).

Spiritual Teaching of Father Steuart, with notes of his retreats and conferences. Collected and arranged by Katherine Kendall (Burns and Oates 16s).

Be Ye Perfect, by David L. Greenstock (Herder 37s 6d).

TWO VOICES: one that of faith, telling us that God is good; the other that of "experience," questioning it. The apt choice of title, citing Fr. Steuart's own words, sums up what Fr. Martindale has done; he has shown, from intimate personal knowledge, that Fr. Steuart heard both voices. He heard, and re-echoed, the voice of faith. He also heard within himself the voice of "experience"; and because he knew from that bitter, crushing experience how hard it is to be good, he was a guide and a leader who deserved the trust as well as the admiration of his followers.

In another, more trivial, sense, two voices sound in these posthumous collections of conferences: that of the polished, literary writer, and that of the homely, earnest *conférencier*, speaking from the heart and carrying conviction by sincerity and simplicity. The devoted people who took down the notes reproduced by Miss Kendall, caught with fidelity the accent heard in the notes on prayer which form part of Fr. Martindale's collection. The conversational ease of that accent does not make Fr. Steuart's courtly periods sound insincere; it serves on the contrary to assure us that when he wrote with the urbanity of formal utterance he was saying things that he felt and meant.

These two books, with the earlier portrait by Miss Kendall and the writings published during his lifetime, will ensure for Fr. Steuart that place in history which his rare and gracious personality so richly merited.

Dr. Greenstock aims at giving a comprehensive outline of the spiritual life according to the mind of St. Thomas. The publishers claim that the book is "remarkably free from technical terminology." In so far as this is true—and it is only true if one concedes that the language of well-educated persons is not to be called technical—the book overlooks another important point: namely that it is not enough to use ordinary words to make ordinary people grasp the thought of theologians. To grasp, and to be influenced by, the impersonal, abstract, almost mechanical presentation of sanctity in such a treatise as this, one needs the training and mental habits of a theologian; and then one will not need the non-technical vocabulary.

The special contention of the book is that the command "Be ye perfect" can be understood as applicable to all, if one considers essential perfection and not accidental perfection. The reason for this special insistence is said to be that the great doctrine of essential perfection, especially as this term is applied to sanctifying grace, is the very foundation of our whole spiritual life and "has been neglected to a great extent by spiritual writers of late."

Dr. Greenstock alludes to the report of the Carmelite congress in Madrid in 1923, citing the statement: "In the mansions of the Interior Castle of our Mother St. Teresa, there are to be found two orders of phenomena utterly distinct: on the one hand, those wherein the soul acts spontaneously with the help of divine grace: on the other, those wherein the soul is supernaturally impelled by God." He adds that this distinction *between the ascetical and the mystical ways* has since been generally accepted by theologians. It is surprising to hear that the distinction between "acquired" and "infused" prayer is accepted as the distinction between asceticism and mysticism. It is almost as surprising as to hear that recent spiritual writers have neglected the idea that sanctifying grace is the foundation of the spiritual life.

The best thing about the book, and a thing that deserves high praise, is the way in which it shows that sane asceticism and sane mysticism are inseparable from sane dogmatic theology. Its special polemic is less convincing.

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ONE of the great occupational risks of business life under the pressure of to-day is that the practical man of affairs neglects his outside reading, and all too easily falls into a narrow circle of immediate preoccupations. There is always loss in this, and the Catholic business or professional man, as a member of the Church Universal, has a particularly strong reason for keeping his mind open to wider horizons. Certainly it was never more necessary than now to follow world happenings. A direct chain of causes and effects ties every business to economical changes in the world, which are themselves as often the consequence as the cause of changes in men's political and social ideas. These ideas in their turn come out of the religions, or irreligions, of contemporary man.

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